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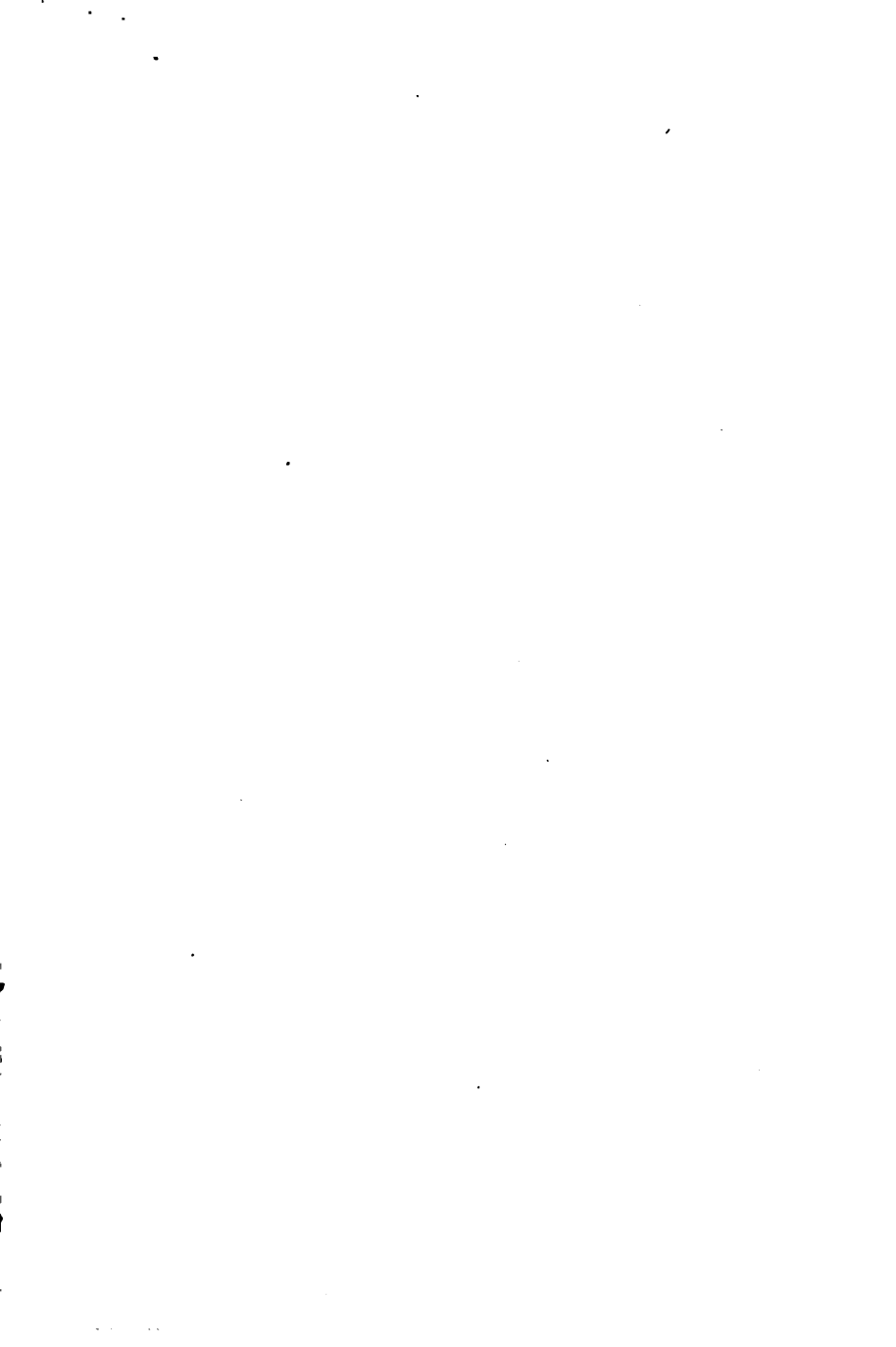
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The image shows a book cover with a central rectangular label. The label has a thin black border and contains the text 'ALVARO' and 'XNO' in a stylized, hand-drawn font. The background of the cover is a light cream color, decorated with a repeating pattern of stylized flowers and leaves in a muted blue-grey color. The flowers are simple, five-petaled shapes, and the leaves are elongated and pointed. The overall design is minimalist and artistic.

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A HARD KNOT

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VOL. II.

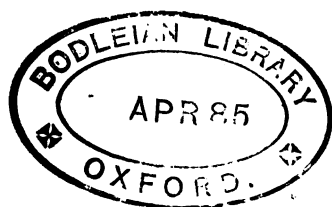
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A HARD KNOT.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE MILLIONNAIRE'S CONFESSION.

MR. CARGILL leaned heavily upon his gold-headed staff as he took his place. Those who had seen him only three days ago, and even those who had personal acquaintance with him, would have been startled by the transformation the man had undergone. Indeed, if twenty years had elapsed since Friday, and every year had heaped new misfortune upon him, the change could not have been more marked and terrible.

The form which had been held erect was bent and shrunken ; the head which

had been raised so high was bowed on his breast; the eyes which had been so sharp and haughty were dull and sunken. In every lineament was stamped humiliation and shame.

The millionaire, proud and austere in the consciousness of his wealth, position, and power, had become a weak, broken-down old man, verging upon his dotage. It was a pitiable spectacle the great man presented, fallen from his height of pride and grandeur.

In commiseration for his unhappy position and his evident bodily weakness, he was allowed to sit during the examination.

His voice was feeble and unsteady as he thanked the Sheriff for the consideration shown to him, and professed himself ready to give any information in his power that might be required of him.

The chief object to be gained in examining Mr. Cargill was the knowledge

of the true position the prisoner had occupied in his confidence, so as to detect how far the peculiar circumstances in which the witness was involved had supplied a motive for the assassination of Jean Gorbai. To this end it was necessary to obtain from him a confirmation of Sarah's narrative. He corroborated every detail, and supplied others. Although he spoke in a feeble, sickly manner, he made no effort to conceal anything. He seemed to have come there with the determination to lay bare the innermost recesses of his heart, the profoundest secrets of his life.

His marriage with Katie Douglas had been forced upon him by his father. He did not seek to defend in any way the miserable weakness and baseness of which he had been guilty in marrying the lady whilst his whole thought and feeling were bound up in another. He only said that he had submitted to his father's will because he had seen that there was no other

means of saving his house from utter ruin than by this union.

‘She was a good and true wife to a false and indifferent husband,’ he said in a stifling voice; ‘and I think her goodness and the affection she gave me, acting upon my own sense of my unworthiness, made me dislike her all the more; for, like most other people, I might have forgiven an offence committed against myself, but I could not forgive the daily smarts her fidelity caused me in daily reminding me of my own baseness.

‘The fact that Mrs. Burnett and my wife were about to become mothers about the same time suggested the wretched trick of exchanging the children, so that the offspring of the woman I loved might inherit the fortune which my wife’s dowry had enabled me to realize. The woman Jean Gorbai had worked in one of our factories, and on more than one occasion I had saved her from being discharged, on

account of her propensity for drink and neglect of her work. This rendered her, as she repeatedly declared, devoted to my interests, and ready to serve me at any time and in any way.

‘At length she was discharged, and she went back to her native place, Greenock, where she got married ; but the moment I acquainted her that I wanted her help she came to me. She was quick and cunning, and undertook to carry out my wishes in every particular, in consideration of an annual allowance. She came to London, as I directed her, but, much to my chagrin, she brought with her her husband. She told me she had not been able to avoid that, as Gorbal, who was a seaman, was of a jealous disposition, and would scarcely trust her out of his sight. She assured me, however, that he was safe as herself ; and as he was a silent taciturn man, who made no attempt to interfere with our arrangements, further than by his insisting upon being a party to

them, my objections to his presence were overcome, and he remained with his wife at Morley's Hotel until the event transpired.'

'The exchange of children was effected then?'

'Yes, it was; the plan proved completely successful. Everything occurred as we had hoped and anticipated, and before the children were a week old the exchange was effected, by the agency of Dr. Largie, Jean Gorbal, and her husband. The arrangement was that I should send my wife's nurse from the room, and, whilst she was away, the doctor carried the infant to the anteroom. There Jean was to be in waiting with Mrs. Burnett's infant, and as the clothes for both children had been prepared of exactly similar shape and colour, there was to be nothing to do but exchange. I heard the doctor speaking, and, afraid that he might waken Mrs. Cargill, I went to the door, to warn him to lower his voice. I heard him saying: "You should have

brought it at once, as I told you." Jean Gorbal answered him, as I thought, sulkily: "I thought better of it—the child might have cried, or made a row, while I was waiting, and that would have spoiled the business. I can go to the room in a minute, and if anybody sees me they'll think it's my own mistress's child I've got. Then I'll leave this one there, and bring the other back. If anybody sees, they won't see anything out of the ordinary." She took the child away, and the doctor went with her. When he came back, he asked if Mrs. Cargill was sleeping. I answered, "Yes;" and cautioned him not to speak so loud. Whilst I was speaking, the door of the anteroom opened, and Jean Gorbal entered with Mrs. Burnett's child. The clothes had been so carefully arranged, that although the doctor and I were aware of the deception, we could scarcely detect any difference, and, for a minute, we could scarcely believe that this was not the

same child which had just been taken away.

‘Jean had left the door open, and we heard the cries of the child coming from Mrs. Burnett’s apartment. The doctor sent her back immediately to still its cries, and taking the infant she carried, he returned to Mrs. Cargill’s room, and placed it in the crib from which my wife’s daughter had been lifted a few moments previously. He left the room for a time, and during his absence my wife awakened.

‘She took the child in her arms and fondled it, without the slightest suspicion of the treachery that had been at-work during her sleep.

‘When the doctor came back he looked pale, and exceedingly anxious. When I spoke to him in private, he told me he did not like the work I had forced him to do ; that nothing, save the obligations he was under to me, would have tempted him to do it ; and hoped that I was satisfied.

‘Ten years ago my wife died. Up to the last she had no suspicion that the child she had cared for so fondly, and had loved so tenderly—all the more tenderly because she felt herself to be an unloved wife—was not her own. Up to the last she was good and affectionate to me, and never breathed one word of reproach. She told me, at last, that she had for some time known of my association with her former governess, and with the words of forgiveness on her lips she died.’

The old man’s voice had become almost inaudible; it seemed as if the memory of the good woman, towards whom he had acted so basely, overwhelmed him, and compelled him to pause for breath.

‘That memory,’ he went on, in a quavering voice, ‘was the sharpest of all the stings my own acts had formed to torture me and render my life miserable, whilst I tried to hide the sore from the world by gilding it over with the show of my wealth.

I know that there are many who have envied me my riches; but there is many a labourer on my estate, many a worker in my factories, with whom I would joyfully have changed places, had that been possible.

‘ Previous to my wife’s death I had a misunderstanding with Mrs. Burnett. I, who was so false myself, would have no mercy for falsehood in others; and since then I have not spoken with her. I know where she lives. I have often desired to see her, and to see my child, but I have held back—I scarcely know why, except that I cannot bear to meet the woman for whose sake I sinned so much, and who deceived me. Had it not been for that, I would have married her. Dr. Largie died about five years ago.

‘ Jean Gorbai received an allowance from me: she repeatedly insisted upon having the amount increased, and two years ago—I suppose to be the better able to annoy me into

compliance with her wishes—she came to live in Glasgow, and rented the house in Port-Dundas where she was assassinated. I know nothing of her life, beyond the fact that she drank much and had always an aversion to work. Of her husband I have heard nothing for about eight or nine years, when deceased told me he had been shipwrecked—I forget where—in fact, I do not think that she named any place.’

This statement had been all written down, and now that he had finished it, his head was bent forward on his hands, which were clasped on the top of his staff. There was a strange pause in the proceedings, as if the suspense for what was to follow made all present hold their breath.

CHAPTER XIX.

ANOTHER TACK.

INSPECTOR SPEIRS, who had gone out for a moment in obedience to a signal from Hadden, returned, and handed a note to the Sheriff.

The latter perused the communication, and, despite the great self-control he exercised over himself, he started slightly and grew pale.

He passed the note to the Fiscal, and in a few minutes afterwards the examination proceeded.

The note Inspector Speirs had handed to Mr. Lyon was a certificate of the marriage of Alexander Tavendale and Catherine Cargill.

‘The prisoner is your nephew,’ said the Fiscal, holding the paper he had just received under his hand.

‘He is the son of my sister, who married in opposition to the wishes of her family. After her husband’s death, I took charge of the boy, and educated him. Latterly he has had a position in our counting-house.’

‘You trusted him as one of your family?’

‘Yes.’

‘And he was frequently at your house?’

‘He was until a few months ago, when for private reasons I desired him to make his visits fewer.’

‘What were the private reasons for that request?’

‘I was dissatisfied with his conduct,’ was the reluctant answer.

‘On what grounds?’

Mr. Cargill paused, and appeared to find some difficulty in properly shaping his response.

‘I had learned he was living beyond his income, and his conduct in the office was careless and inattentive, and—and I feared that my daughter was learning to like him more than I wished.’

‘Then you never thought of him as a husband for your daughter?’

‘No.’

‘Did he ever make any proposal?’

‘Never; and I would not have agreed to it if he had, unless I had found that my compliance was positively necessary to secure my daughter’s happiness. In that case I would not have opposed their marriage.’

‘Did he know that?’

‘I do not think he did.’

‘Now, consider this question well, and answer to the best of your knowledge. Was the prisoner aware of the fact of your daughter’s birth?’

‘No,’ was the hesitating reply.

‘Are you sure that he did not, from you

or from anyone else, learn these facts, any time before the murder of Jean Gorbal ?’

The millionaire breathed hard, and his thin lips quivered. The prisoner regarded him with an anxious glance.

‘Yes,’ he answered, in a husky whisper. ‘My daughter learned the miserable secret during my absence, and as she met the prisoner oftener than I suspected—as, in brief, she loved him—she thought it her duty to make him aware of the circumstances, and she told him all.’

‘When was that?’

‘So far as I am aware, it was several days before—before the end of the week before last.’

‘Was the prisoner, to your knowledge, acquainted with the deceased?’

‘He was not acquainted with her, so far as I know; but on one occasion he delivered a message from me to her, at her house in Port-Dundas.’

‘ Now, have you any reason to suppose that the prisoner might have wished to remove Jean Gorbai, in the hope, by so doing, to secure your consent to his marriage with your daughter, and in the desire to save her from exposure and the loss of fortune ?’

‘ I have no reason to suppose that.’

‘ Jean Gorbai possessed certain proofs of the transfer of the children ?’

‘ She did, in the shape of various letters written to her at different times by Mrs. Burnett and myself, before and since the event.’

Mr. Cargill was now permitted to stand aside. Mr. Hewitt, the prisoner’s agent, hastily advanced to him, and whispered :

‘ Mr. Tavendale desires me to say, sir, that he thinks you should not remain here. I, as his agent, will bring you every particular of the result of to-day’s proceedings.’

‘ Thank you ; I shall be glad to see you.’

But he made no effort to retire immediately, and Mr. Hewitt was obliged to return to his place without any satisfactory answer.

A variety of witnesses from Port-Dundas were again examined, the object being to discover anyone who could identify the prisoner as one of the men who were seen about Jean Gorbals's house on the day of the 15th. In this, however, the examination was not successful. The prisoner had been seen by Mrs. Fraser, the grocer, on the Saturday preceding the day of the crime near her shop, but none of the witnesses had seen him thereabouts on the Monday.

The prisoner's declaration was very simple. On the 13th he had been made aware of the strange history of his uncle's past life. He was naturally much troubled on account of his cousin, whom he had left in a state of sad affliction. He doubted the truth of the story, it was so strange,

and that very evening he had gone in search of Jean Gorbai in order to learn from her what credit might be given to the narrative, and what proof she could produce to authenticate it. He had failed to find her, and he had gone again on the 14th (Saturday) and several occasions. He had seen her once, but she had been under the influence of drink; and, although she boasted and jibed much, she told him nothing. He was still determined to see what proof she possessed, and had intended to watch her and bribe her till she displayed it.

He had been deeply pained and chagrined when he learned that she had been murdered, and he was wholly innocent of complicity in the remotest degree with the horrible crime.

He declined to say where he had been on the evening of the 15th, but he had not been near Port-Dundas.

The examination was adjourned till that day week, on the application of Inspector

Speirs, who had just received a telegram from Captain Mactier stating that, by that date, he hoped to be able to produce important evidence.

Bail to any amount was offered on behalf of the prisoner, but the Sheriff declined to admit bail.

The declaration of the prisoner had an effect on the Sheriff up to the point where he declared his determination not to produce evidence of his whereabouts on the evening of the crime. If that portion of the statement had been omitted, or if it had been made to the opposite effect, Mr. Hewitt expressed his conviction that the Sheriff would have accepted bail. As it was, the whole statement obtained a false colour from that obstinate persistence in concealing the nature of his engagements on that particular evening.

There was one person, however, upon whom the final declaration had more effect than all the rest had. Hadden had listened

with unmoved countenance to the prisoner's explanation until he came to those last words, and then the detective's visage underwent a startling change.

He looked up at the prisoner with an expression of utter bewilderment, which gradually changed to one of distress. For several minutes after the Sheriff had quitted the chamber, and the prisoner had been removed, he stood as one dumbfounded by some extraordinary revelation.

Inspector Speirs touched his arm, and Hadden started as if with an electric shock. He seized the inspector's hand, and shook it wildly.

'Lord help me!' he groaned; 'this is awful!'

'What's awful?'

'Where's the Sheriff?' asked Hadden, without appearing to have heard the question.

'In his private room. The Fiscal has just gone, and he is alone.'

Hadden, without a word of explanation, darted away to the room, leaving the inspector with an impression that Sly Jock had lost his wits.

Without pausing to knock, Hadden rushed into the room where Mr. Lyon was seated, with his face hidden in his hands, thinking of the certificate of marriage, and of the hopes it destroyed.

The violent entrance of the detective startled him, and he looked up.

‘We’re all wrong—we’re all wrong!’ cried Hadden excitedly, swinging his arms about.

‘Who is all wrong, and what?’ asked the Sheriff, surprised, and somewhat annoyed by this intrusion.

‘We are—you are—and oh, worst of all, I have been.’

‘Wrong about what?’

‘This case—*that man is innocent!*’

He made the declaration vehemently, and Mr. Lyon stared at him, as if he, too,

suspected that his wits had been affected in some way.

He frowned slightly as he made answer :

‘Innocent ? All that has passed to-day leads to the opposite conviction.’

‘No—no ! you’re wrong, and I’m the cause of it all !’ cried Hadden, with unabated excitement.

‘What ! you say this ?—you, who have been the main instrument in bringing his guilt to light ?’

Hadden pressed his head against his hands, and swayed his body to and fro, like one distracted with the toothache.

‘Yes, I say that—I, who have been the wretch to bring him to this pass. Lord help me—Lord help me ! I have ruined him.’

‘Will you explain yourself, sir ?’ said the magistrate impatiently.

‘Yes ; I told you that the murder was committed by a man who had gone about it with the precision of a scientific process.

He had arranged everything—*everything*, remember—with the exactitude of a mathematician. That man, whoever he was, is prepared with an *alibi*—this man has none. That man knows that everything depends on the strength of his *alibi*, and he is prepared with one as carefully arranged as the details of the murder. Alick Tavendale is not that man.'

'I shall be glad when you are able to convince me of that,' said Mr. Lyon drily; 'meanwhile I must wish you good-after-noon.'

'Will you not help me?'

'I can do nothing for you. You have succeeded in implicating him so far that I see little hope for him. You must extricate him if you can.'

'And I will—I will !' cried John Hadden, rushing out of the room, stung by Mr. Lyon's reproaches, still more by the keen teeth of his own conscience.

He procured his hat and staff, and with-

out a word of explanation to anyone made off toward Port-Dundas.

At the entrance to one of the dirtiest of the 'lands,' which was situated within a stone's-throw of the house in which Jean Gorbal had been murdered, he stopped a minute to gain breath and collect his thoughts.

'I must have that boy,' he muttered, as, pressing his hat on his head, and trying to force his features into a grin, he ascended the dirty stone steps to a door of a 'but an' a ben,' which was known as a cheap lodging for tramps and wayfarers who could afford no better.

As he paused on the last step, he saw within a little fat old woman with coarse features and a cap with enormous frills, which had grown yellow in the smoke and dust of the place. An unfortunate child was rolling about on the floor, playing with some bits of sticks and old canes; whilst a lad, sharp and ragged, aged about fourteen

years—the same who had told the captain of the man who had sent him with a message to Bob Little—was amusing himself and the child by an acrobatic performance.

At the present moment he was standing on his head, and the old woman was angrily calling to him in a husky voice :

‘ Will ye get down, ye vermin, and see wha’s coming ?’

CHAPTER XX.

WILLIE THORNE.

MR. HADDEN stepped into the place before the boy, in obedience to the angry command of the old woman, had regained the natural position of the human body, and stood on his feet instead of his head. Hadden, with a broad grin on his visage, as if he had been delighted with the performance, patted the boy on the head, and the boy submitted to the act of patronage with a sly glance at the visitor.

Boy though he was in years and size, the life he had led had given him the experience and cunning of a man. His sharp face wore an old-fashioned expression of curiosity and uncertainty, as if he had some

remote dread that the presence of such a well-dressed personage as the detective boded little good to the establishment.

His suspicion was rather confirmed than dissipated when Hadden, as if in reward for his performances, gave him a penny.

‘Clever lad,’ said Hadden, in his most genial tones ; ‘you’ll make a fortune by-and-by if you don’t emigrate.’

The lad pocketed the penny, and glanced toward the dame, as if to see what she had to say on the subject.

The dame had been knitting on the entrance of the visitor, but she had dropped the work on her lap, and was now peering inquisitively at the gentleman. She did not know him to be connected with the police, or she would have given him a kindly welcome at once ; for Mrs. Gibb had more than once had dealings with the authorities on account of some of her lodgers, and it was a principle of hers always to keep on.

good terms with the 'force.' So she was always ready to supply the representatives of the law with any information she possessed, and to regale them with 'a dram' as often as they would accept her hospitality.

Mother Gibb's characteristics were pretty well known to the constables on the beat; and one of these characteristics was that, although willing at any moment to place her services at their disposal, she had never yet, by any chance, told them anything she could, by feigning ignorance or resorting to falsehood, conceal. It was known, too, that on more occasions than one she had enabled certain gentlemen or ladies who happened to be wanted to make a successful retreat from the grasp of justice.

Her house—or hovel it should be called—was, therefore, one of the most closely watched of the low lodgings of Port-Dundas. She was aware of that—aware that everything she said was disbelieved until it had been proven true, and yet she preserved the

utmost good-humour with any members of the force who visited her, whatever might be the hour, and whatever the inconvenience to herself or her lodgers.

The latter consisted chiefly of tramps and thieves of the lowest character, of both sexes and all ages. She charged threepence a night for lodgings, and frequently the hovel, which was not more than ten feet in breadth by twelve in length, would shelter over a dozen of those vagrants in one night. How they found room to stretch themselves was a problem not easily solved by an uninitiated observer of the place. It was only managed by the gross system of huddling men and women, boys and girls, together, like so many sacks of cotton rolled on the floor and the truckle-beds.

As a general rule, Mother Gibb's lodgers entered late and went out early, so that, as at present, in the afternoons she was left to her own reflections and the management of her grandson, Willie Thorne, with the care

of any unfortunate child who might be left to her charge, on payment of fourpence a day, whilst the mother was at work in the mill.

At these hours Mother Gibb was rarely disturbed, save by a stray missionary or tract-distributor, who, being new to the place, understood little of her character, and, in the earnest pursuance of duty, hoped to benefit the woman and her household by counsel and prayer.

To such visitors the woman was scarcely civil, and if the visit happened to be repeated, she became decidedly uncivil.

The plain black clothes and the innocent-like smile of Hadden suggested to her that he belonged to the class she cared least about, and so, whilst she still watched him narrowly, she picked up her work and recommenced knitting somewhat sullenly.

‘You don’t know me, mistress,’ said Hadden, with his broad simple grin, and while his restless eyes noted the dispo-

sition and character of everything in the place.

‘No. I dinna.’

‘Ah! never mind; we’ll hope for better acquaintance.’

‘What for?’

The question was plump, very plain, and in a degree surly, so that Hadden was slightly perplexed for a fitting answer. He stooped down to the little girl, who was sitting on the floor, staring at him.

‘Do you like to see your brother standing on his head, my lass?’ he asked with comical simplicity.

But the child, as if gifted with unusual insight into character, shrank away from him and hid herself behind the skirts of Mother Gibb, who thereupon spoke:

‘Willie Thorne is no the brither o’ the bairn, maister.’

‘I see, I see—a neighbour’s? Just so; but Willie Thorne is your grandson, eh?’

‘Well, and what about that?’

‘And his mother’s dead, and his father’s over the sea—isn’t that it, eh?’

‘Ye seem to ken a’ about it.’

‘Just so,’ replied Mr. Hadden complacently; ‘but I’m not going to speak about the lad’s parents. You don’t want him to take a trip after his father, do you?’

The woman started, and her coarse visage twitched with suppressed anger.

‘Na; no if I can help it.’

‘Well, there’s a danger of it if you keep him here. Now, I want a sharp lad just like Willie; and if you’ll let him go with me, I’ll bring him up to a good trade, and place him beyond the danger of getting into the same trouble as his father.’

‘And wha are ye?’

‘Jock Sly.’

At the sound of the name which had on several occasions spread terror amongst Mother Gibb’s lodgers, the woman became humble at once, and willing to comply with anything he might require.

‘ Hey ! what way didna ye say that afore? What would ye do wi’ the lad ?’

‘ He is a sharp lad—a very sharp lad, and as I’ve been watching him a good bit, I am certain that if he were to join the force under a skilful guide—myself, for instance—he’d be an honour to the profession, and a credit to me—eh ?’

The woman peered over her knitting at the smiling face of the detective, as if she did not know how far she might trust him.

‘ Ay, he’s a sharp lad,’ she muttered.

‘ For instance, now, we’ll try him. Come here, Willie.’

Hadden, making himself quite at home, drew a stool towards him and sat down. The boy, who had been listening with a cunning twinkle in his eyes to everything that was said, obeyed the visitor’s command, and approached him slowly, but without any of the shyness of ordinary children.

‘ Now, Willie,’ said Hadden, drawing him between his knees, and scanning his features

narrowly as he spoke, whilst he grinned with the complacency of a friendly patron of the family ; ‘ you would like to be rich, eh?’

‘ Ay, I would.’

‘ And I told you a minute ago that you would make a fortune by-and-by. Will I show you how?’

‘ If you can.’

‘ I can. Suppose you learn to read and write; you know a good deal already how certain things are managed, and if you were to become a detective one day, you would always have plenty of money in your pocket, you would have little to do, and you would be going about to the theatres and amusements—everywhere that there is fun and frolic going on. You would be drawing hundreds of pounds as rewards for your work, and if you were a steady fellow you would make a fortune. What do you think of that?’

‘ What do ye think, granny?’ said the lad, turning to his grandam.

‘I think it sounds well eneuch, lad ; but I dinna ken how it might turn out.’

‘Just so,’ Hadden broke in, ‘you don’t see how it would suit him; but I see it in his eyes; the lad was born for the force. Now I’ll show you how it would work: there’s that case of the woman Gorbai; suppose Willie here could find out anything that would help us to lay our hands on the murderer—why, he’d get a hundred pounds down for that job alone. What do you say to that?’

The lad’s eyes glistened at the thought of possessing a sum which seemed to him unlimited wealth, and his fingers moved nervously, as if they were already clutching the prize.

‘Then there’s the fun and the sport you would have in such a profession—why, it’s more like a private gentleman who’s got nothing to do but go about and amuse himself than working for a living,’ continued Hadden, his own eyes twinkling with satis-

faction at the impression he saw his words had made.

‘But how is he to set about doing anything o’ that sort?’ queried the dame cautiously, and knitting fast.

‘Will you trust him to me?’

‘If the lad likes.’

‘Here’s your chance, Willie; you’ll maybe never have such another. Will you go with me, and try for the hundred pounds?’

‘Whan?’

‘Just now. We’ll begin at once to follow the track; we’ll begin with the dandy you might have seen going into the court over there on Monday evening.’

‘What was he like?’

‘Tall, a swell, smoking, and carrying a silk umbrella in this fashion.’

And Hadden, rising to his feet, mimicked in a comical fashion the airs of a dandy swinging his umbrella as he walked along.

Willie clasped his hands together, and

his eyes opened as wide as if they were about to start from their sockets.

‘The hundred pounds for me!’ he cried.

Mother Gibb dropped her knitting, and stared at the lad.

‘Eh? — what?’ gasped Hadden, who, speaking at a venture from the deductions he had been able to make on his examination of Jean Gorbals’s house, had certainly not expected that he would hit the mark so closely as Willie’s exclamation seemed to betoken he had done.

‘Was it a white hat the dandy chap had on?’ asked Willie breathlessly.

‘Maybe,’ answered Hadden, nodding sagaciously, whilst he was trembling lest anything should disappoint the anticipations he had already formed, and desirous rather to make Willie declare everything he knew by concealing his own ignorance on the subject.

‘And a blue scarf?’ continued Willie.

‘Very like.’

‘And a pin wi’ a horse-shoe and diamond nails?’

‘That’s liker him still.’

‘Then that was the chap that nearly tumbled ower me at the corner, and gied me a crack wi’ his umbreller for being in his way.’

‘What colour trousers?’

‘Snuffy brown.’

That was not the colour of the trousers Hadden had found in Tavendale’s lodgings; and in his excitement at the discovery upon the brink of which he seemed to be standing, he clutched his staff viciously.

‘What colour and shaped coat?’

‘Dark blue coat, and short cut.’

That was not the colour of Tavendale’s coat, nor the shape, so far as he could understand from the brief description ‘short cut.’

‘I told you, mistress, the lad was born for the force!’ cried Hadden exultantly; and again, to the boy: ‘You’ll make the fortune, Willie, that’s certain. One thing more

—about what o'clock was it when the swell tumbled on you ?'

'It was after dark—maybe about eight o'clock.'

That was the hour—at any rate, near enough to serve the purpose.

'And what made you notice his get-up so closely ?'

'Because he gied me a knock with his umbreller.'

'Did you see his face ?'

'No partickler ; my een got sort o' fastened on the blue scarf and the bonnie pin, and the chap went on as fast as he could when he gied me the blow, and I went on a bit, hollering after him. That was how I noticed his trousers and coat, when he passed under the lamp. I called him a blue devil for his coat, and snuffy swell for his trousers.'

'You saw where he went to, then ?'

'Ay, he went into Higgin's Close, a bit after he thought I'd stopped following him.'

Hadden gripped the boy by the arm.

‘Higgin’s Close? — that’s just behind Jean Gorbals’s house.’

‘That’s the spot—dinna squeeze my arm, maister! it’s rather hard.’

‘Why didn’t you tell us about this before?’

‘Naebody axed me.’

‘Would you know the swell again?’

‘I’d ken his back, for I took his measure.’

‘What height was he?’

‘Nearly six foot.’

‘You wouldn’t know his face again?’

‘Maybe I would, if he were dressed in the same togs as I saw him in that nicht.’

‘Willie, your fortune’s made.’

‘Hooroar!’

And Willie, in his delight, displayed a strong inclination to stand on his head again.

‘You’ll let him go with me, mistress?’

‘I winna say nae, if the lad likes,’

answered Mother Gibb, who, although interested at the prospect of the reward, was stolid as ever. 'But you'll have to give me the cash if there's ony comes o' what Willie's tauld ye.'

'All right, mistress; I'll take care of that. You know where to hear of Jock Sly if you want him, so that you needn't be afraid of the cash getting into the wrong hands. Good-evening, mistress. Come along, Willie, my lad.'

'Are you gaun to gie me the hundred pounds?'

'Come and see.'

Willie, nothing loth, darted down the stairs to the street, his bushy, unkempt, and dirty hair tossing about his head confusedly in the wind. A cap was a luxury with which he was almost wholly unacquainted.

Hadden followed him, and proceeded with him in the direction of Higgin's Close.

CHAPTER XXI.

IN THE STABLE-YARD.

KATE had retained her position in the lobby of the Sheriff's chambers until the last ; but she was not aware that the business was over for the day until the door by which she was standing was flung open, and several clerks and constables hurried out.

She was hustled back from the door, and she would have been thrown down had it not been for a tall gentleman who gripped her arm and supported her.

‘Miss Cargill!’ he ejaculated, in a low startled kind of voice. ‘I did not know you were here—the Fiscal understood you were too ill to attend.’

Her mind was so much occupied with the

one cruel thought that she paid no heed ; she did not even seem to observe that a gentleman who was a stranger to her was acquainted with her name.

‘ What has been done ? ’ she asked, trembling with excitement.

‘ The examination has been adjourned till this day week,’ was the respectful answer.

‘ Adjourned—oh, then he will be saved ! I knew that they could not condemn him. He will be saved ! ’

‘ I hope so, madam—sincerely hope so, for your sake as well as his own ; but he is very obstinate, and I am afraid will do himself more harm by his obstinacy than they can do by all the evidence they can bring to bear against him.’

‘ You are his friend ? ’

‘ Yes, my name is Hewitt ; I am his agent in this unhappy affair.’

‘ You his agent—you will save him ! ’

Mr. Hewitt looked somewhat gloomy, and shook his head as he replied :

‘Whatever can be done to help him I will do—rest assured of that.’

‘Heaven bless you, sir—Heaven bless you!’ she cried tearfully, although her eyes were parched, and she pressed his hand warmly.

‘Shall I conduct you to the carriage, madam?’ he said abruptly, as if anxious to avoid any expression of her gratitude whilst affairs were still in such a doubtful state. ‘Mr. Cargill is still in the office, and I will inform him that you are waiting.’

‘No, no, thank you! I—oh, here is Easton!’

That lady advanced to her mistress as her name was pronounced. She had long ago grown tired of waiting in the carriage, and so she had made her way hither in order to beguile the time by observing events.

Mr. Hewitt resigned the lady to the care of her attendant, and, apologizing for the necessity of abruptly taking his leave, was

about to go away, when Kate detained his hand.

‘One word, sir: can you—can anyone obtain for me permission to see Mr. Taven-dale to-day?’

‘I am afraid not to-day, madam; but I will try to obtain an order from one of the sheriffs.’

‘A sheriff can give the order?’

‘Certainly.’

‘Thank you, sir; I will not in that case have to delay you. One of the sheriffs is a—is a friend.’

‘I shall be most happy to serve you, and should you fail to see your friend, you can send to my office in an hour, and I will do my best to procure the order.’

He hurried away, and disappeared immediately amongst the crowd outside.

‘Take me to some place where I can wait whilst you carry a message to Mr. Lyon,’ she said quickly. She was very weak, but

the excitement of the occasion seemed to give her unusual strength.

‘We can go to the Royal George, ma’am,’ said Easton, whose mind was chiefly occupied with thoughts of dinner. ‘It’s a fine hotel, quite close to here, and you can have something nice to eat; you must be hungry by this time—I am, although we had a glass of wine and a couple of biscuits.’

Kate almost sickened at the mention of food, but she submitted to be conducted to the Royal George, where she was shown into a private parlour overlooking the stable-yard.

Easton was directed to bid the coachman put his horse in the stable, while Kate, seating herself at a little table by the window, hastily penned a few lines to Mr. Lyon.

Much to Easton’s indignation, she was despatched at once with the note, without being allowed time to consume another

glass of wine and couple of biscuits, much less to obtain dinner.

Kate had risen to give her the note, and she now stood at the window looking vacantly out upon the old-fashioned yard. The Royal George was an old-fashioned establishment, slow and steady in its ways. The house was always quiet and respectable. There was no confusion—no rushing about of commercial travellers in a hurry to catch trains, tumbling luggage about, and shouting to porters. Everything about the place was slow and conservative, and the only days on which its tranquillity was disturbed were the market-days, when burly conservative country people of the middle classes came to dine and discuss the markets, and waken the house to life.

As this did not happen to be one of the lively days, Kate was undisturbed by any jarring sounds; but her reverie was suddenly interrupted, and her eyes frightened by something she saw.

Hewitt, Alick's solicitor, crossed the yard, and entered the stable, as if seeking some one. He came out immediately, as if he had been disappointed; and as he was recrossing the yard, he was saluted by an ostler, who, pitchfork in hand, had just descended the ladder from the hayloft opposite to the window at which Kate was standing now observant.

She could not hear their words, but she was somewhat surprised to observe the air of familiarity with which the ostler appeared to address Mr. Hewitt, and the quiet way in which the latter submitted to it, as if it were the customary style of their intercourse.

The ostler was a smart fellow of stunted growth, who had been a jockey, and might have been one still. His slight build and short figure, with the bare face, gave one an impression, at a distance, that he was quite a youth. This impression was heightened by the style of his dress. He was a bit of

a dandy in his own way, and affected the fastest colours and the loudest.

Although in his stable garb he could not display much of his fashionable propensities, there was enough left in his working attire to indicate the man of the turf.

On approaching him, the lines about his mouth and small cunning eyes seemed to contradict the notion of his age which his general appearance supplied, and one was compelled to admit that it was impossible to hazard a guess as to what might be his age, between twenty-five and forty.

Leaning coolly on his pitchfork, he surveyed Mr. Hewitt with the manner of an equal and a familiar. The lawyer was evidently chagrined by the fellow's manner; but either not having the power to correct, or not being willing to make a fuss about so small a matter, he swung his slim umbrella, and tried to look indifferent and unembarrassed. As a variety to the swinging movement he placed the umbrella be-

hind him, and leaned heavily upon it, occasionally glancing at his watch, as if he had an appointment, and was in a hurry to depart.

‘You were to have been here i’ the mornin’.’

‘Yes; but, confound it, haven’t I told you I had to be at the Fiscal’s all day?’

‘Oh, it’s of no consequence to me; only I hope, now you’ve come, that you’ve brought the cash—because there’ll be a blow up if it is not paid to-night, every farthing.’

‘Well, I have not brought it, and it can’t be paid to-night, or to-morrow night either.’

‘Phew!’ whistled the ostler; and he began to chew a straw, whilst he watched the discontented face of Hewitt cunningly.

‘Now, look here, Nick,’ said the latter, familiarly persuasive: ‘get the old beggar to give me ten days longer, and he’ll have all that he ought to get, and more. If he

blows upon me now—why, that will ruin me at once, and *that* won't help you or him either.'

Nick appeared to reflect, and then said, quietly:

'All right, I'll see the old chap, and learn what he is going to do; then I'll come round to you to-night.'

'What time?'

'Twelve.'

'That'll do. Remember to tell him that he must wait if he wants to get anything.'

'I'll tell him.'

Mr. Hewitt, muttering something about expecting to see him at twelve, hurried out of the yard.

CHAPTER XXII.

CURIOUS OBSERVATIONS.

KATE observed that Mr. Hewitt quitted the stable-yard with the gait of one who is much dissatisfied about something, whilst attempting, by holding his head higher than usual, to conceal the dissatisfaction. It was, in fact, the gait of a person who attempts to display perfect confidence by the assumption of a swagger and a bold look. Mr. Hewitt swaggered—that is, swaggered so far as the term might be applied to one who maintained always the bearing and manner of the strictest respectability—and, either by accident or design, his hat had been tipped a little to one side, which, as sometimes happens with such

trifling alteration of the arrangements of the dress, gave his grave subdued person a somewhat rakish character.

Kate was struck by this singular change in one upon whose exertions the life of her husband depended; she was unpleasantly disturbed by the change, for, knowing little of the gentleman, she could not help feeling for the moment that the characteristics of the man about town were too easily assumed by the lawyer not to possess some inspiration from his real nature, which was totally concealed in the course of his business transactions.

She had been struck, too, by the familiarity with which the ostler had treated him, and the persuasive manner of Hewitt, as if he had been seeking some favour from the fast-looking personage, who displayed all the characteristics of the blackleg in his sharp cunning face.

The low cunning of the fellow became all the more marked in the vicious grin

with which he watched Mr. Hewitt leave the yard. Then he tucked the pitchfork under his arm, and leering, as if with the greatest gratification at the thought of having 'done' some one, he made his way to the stable-door, where he entered into conversation with the coachman who had driven Miss Cargill into the city, and who was lingering about the stables to see his horses baited.

All these things Kate noted with an attention the source of which, had she tried, she could not possibly have explained; unless it might be—as it certainly had been at first—that she felt her own future so depended on Mr. Hewitt that his every movement was of interest to her now.

In a dreamy way she mentally asked herself what could have been the nature of his interview with that disagreeable character. Her cheeks glowed with the fancy—springing readily from the concentration of

her thought on the one subject—that the interview bore some relation to Jean Gorbal's fate, and that Mr. Hewitt, in his zeal for the cause of his client, had subjected himself to the annoyance he had evidently experienced in the conversation with the ostler.

Easton returned in anything but a pleasant humour. Mr. Lyon had gone away ten minutes before she had reached the office. She had not followed him, because nobody had been able to tell her which way he had gone, or whether he had gone home or not.

‘Mr. Hewitt has just left the yard,’ said Kate hastily; ‘run after him and ask him to spare me a few minutes of his time.’

Easton went out—she did not run, however—and she looked up and down the street. She did not venture beyond the door-step, for rain had begun to fall, and she had no intention of spoiling her bonnet,

or getting her feet wet. It was one of those sudden spring showers which are short and heavy while they last.

She did not see Mr. Hewitt, but she did see a hansom cab driving off at full speed, and running alongside the cab a ragged urchin, who was apparently trying to speak to the occupant.

The occupant was Mr. Hewitt. He had just got into the cab, and as it started, the boy—who was now running by its side, straining his limbs to keep pace with it—had made after it with more than the usual eagerness of the street Arab who hopes to win a gratuity.

‘Got a bawbee, sir?’ shouted the lad, panting and breathless, whilst he strove to get sufficiently beyond the wheel to be able to see the gentleman inside. ‘Bawbee, sir?’

The persistence of the lad attracted the lawyer’s attention, and he leaned forward to look at him with some curiosity.

‘Stand clear!’ shouted the driver, flourishing his whip threateningly.

Whether the lad was satisfied, by the glance he had obtained at the gentleman’s face, that he was not likely to obtain the copper he sought, or was intimidated by the driver, he gradually slackened pace, allowed the cab to shoot ahead; and as soon as it had turned the corner, he wheeled about, and retraced his way toward the Royal George.

Within fifty yards of that establishment he almost rushed into the arms of John Hadden, who, flushed with excitement, and a little out of temper, gripped him by the arm, and shook him savagely.

‘What were you after, Willie, lad?’ he said presently, in a kindlier tone than his look would have induced one to expect. ‘Why did you dart away from me without a word when I was going into the tailor’s, eh, lad—what was’t for?’

Willie Thorne gave himself a shake, as if

to get his limbs into the position out of which they had been shaken by his patron.

‘What did I bolt for?’ he said, somewhat sulkily. ‘Because I saw the chap that hit me wi’ his umbrella Monday week.’

‘Thunder!—where?’

‘Getting into that cab ye saw me running after.’

‘Eh—eh!’ cried the detective, clutching his staff with the air of one beside himself with chagrin. ‘And why didn’t you shout to me instead of bolting off, as if you wanted to give me the slip?’

‘I didna think o’t.’

‘Did you see his face?’

‘Ay, but it wasna the face I kenned; it was the back and shoulders—them I’d swear to—and the umbrella.’

Mr. Hadden clutched his staff still more tightly, and seemed ready to perform a dance of despair.

‘Thunder ! and I did not see him—but you would know him again ?’

‘Ay, onywhere.’

‘Would you know the driver of the cab ?’

‘Ay, onywhere.’

‘Come on, then ; I must get you into a suit of clothes, and then, if our bird’s in Glasgow, we’ll find him before he’s much older.’

Hadden conducted his *protégé* to a cheap ready-made clothing establishment, where he obtained for him the requisite garments. When he had been properly arrayed—having been allowed to wash himself in a little back room of the shop, Willie Thorne presented the appearance of a smart lad, with a premature gravity of visage.

Easton had remained at the door of the Royal George until Hadden and his little comrade had disappeared. She had observed Hadden hurry by the door, and

encounter the boy who had been running after the cab ; and as she had only a few days ago had some dealings with Hadden, she was interested—or rather her curiosity, which was a potent element of her character, was piqued—and in spite of the danger to her bonnet, she had remained at the door watching him, and even thrust her head out partly in the rain to obtain a last glimpse of him as he turned a corner.

Then she went back to her mistress with the information that her utmost exertions had failed to discover Mr. Hewitt.

Kate impatiently looked at her watch.

‘ He said he would be at his office in an hour, and it is nearly an hour since then. I will go there now. Do you know the place ? ’

‘ Mr. Hewitt’s ? ’ answered Easton indifferently. ‘ No, I don’t know where it is, but Mr. Cargill will be here directly, and he will be able to tell you.’

‘ My father coming here ? Then you

have told him !' exclaimed Kate, with a flash of displeasure.

'I met him at the office when I was looking for Mr. Lyon, and the minute he saw me he asked where you were. I couldn't tell him anything but the truth, for he'd have been sure——'

'I would not have wished you to do otherwise.'

'That was just what I thought, ma'am—miss, I should say,' continued Easton pertly, and by that apparent slip of the tongue reminding her mistress of her confidential position ; 'and so I told him you were here, and he bade me say that you were not to leave on any account until he joined you.'

Kate seated herself wearily : the reaction from the excitement which had supported her weak frame all day had begun, and it soon became evident that, even had she purposed to disobey her father's message, she would not have had the strength. She

was compelled to rest upon the couch. But she was reconciled to her position in some degree by the hope that her father would obtain for her the permission to see Tavendale she so much desired.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE MILLIONNAIRE'S DAUGHTERS.

SHE sat with elbow resting on the side of the couch, and her feverish brow on her hand. Her eyes were parched and aching, her pulse fluttering, and her whole strength so exhausted that she felt as if she could not move from the position she had assumed. But the sense of her bodily ailment was almost entirely lost in the bitter trouble of her mind.

Easton took advantage of her mistress's abstraction to quit the apartment in search of dinner, which all the trouble in the world did not seem capable of making her forget or neglect.

Mr. Cargill arrived soon afterward, and

he entered the room, leaning heavily on his staff and the arm of his footman. Without apparently glancing toward Kate, he dropped on a chair by the centre table, and by a motion of his hand dismissed the attendant.

A few minutes of silence, during which the shame-stricken man glanced slowly round the chamber. His eyes rested an instant on a large Chinese screen near the fireplace, and then passed on to his daughter.

Her head drooped before him ; yet there was no anger in his glance. The rigid shrunken features betrayed neither wrath nor sympathy ; but the bent form, which had previously been so erect, and the dull stolid eyes, which had only been a little while ago so keen and bright, indicated how much the man was suffering. How poor was all his wealth, now that it could not purchase any balm to soothe his agony !

‘ I thought you were to remain at home, Katie ? ’ he said, in a voice so feeble and

pitiable, that with a sob she half rose to throw her arms round his neck and comfort him.

The tone and manner revealed to her how dear she was to him in his distress. And yet he checked the movement of her affection by raising his hand, which dropped immediately on his knee like a lump of lead.

‘I am not going to blame you, my poor child,’ he continued, in the same pitiable voice as before. ‘Heaven knows I am bitterly conscious that the blame of what you do, and of the affliction that has befallen you, rests upon myself. But it would have been wiser, I think, for Alick Tavendale’s sake, had you obeyed me. Your marriage with him does not appear to have become known yet, and so long as it can be concealed, it will be one argument the less against him.’

‘I—I could not rest, father, knowing his cruel position. I should have gone mad had I remained at home. Ah, I am

indeed punished for deceiving you, since our marriage argues so fatally against his innocence. But is it so fatal that we must conceal it ?’

‘I do not know. I have consulted his agent, and he thinks that unless the revelation is unavoidable we should not make it.’

Kate bowed her head, as an attendant appeared.

‘The young lady is here, sir.’

‘Bid her enter.’

The door closed on the attendant.

‘Take a seat behind that screen,’ Mr. Cargill said, with a shade of his old firmness in the command. ‘You can hear what passes, but it will be better that you should not be seen at first.’

Without seeking any further explanation of this singular command, Kate obeyed, and took a seat on a chair behind the screen.

The rustling of her dress had scarcely ceased when Sarah Burnett was introduced to the chamber.

She remained standing near the door. She was pale, but self-possessed and respectful. The deep emotion she experienced in being thus brought for the first time into immediate contact with her father was only indicated by the faintest tremor of her lips.

‘Be seated, Sarah Cargill,’ he said coldly.

She trembled at the sound of the name he had given her, but she made no attempt to respond. She took a chair close by where she had been standing, as if she did not think herself warranted yet in displaying any familiarity. Her humility appeared to displease him much, for he said sharply :

‘Come nearer, girl ! Are you a fool ? Come nearer ! Am I not your father ?’

Still without replying, and trembling under his displeasure and the natural agitation with which her peculiar position inspired her, she advanced to a chair almost within arm’s reach of her parent. Her back was turned toward the window, so that unhappily he could not readily perceive

the agitation he caused her, else he might have spoken more mildly.

‘You have found your father,’ he said sternly, ‘but you must learn that at the same time you have lost your liberty. I require implicit obedience from all who—who are connected with me.’

Sarah acknowledged her readiness to obey by a simple inclination of the head. She had received a severe shock in the examination she had undergone in the Fiscal’s office, and she had not yet recovered from its effects sufficiently to be able to conduct herself with her ordinary calmness—a calmness which supplied her character with a firmness equal to that of Mr. Cargill himself, in the days when he had felt himself furthest and safest from the exposure of the past.

In the office Mr. Cargill, after his examination, had been conducted to a seat close to Sarah; and, as soon as the proceedings had finished, Mr. Hewitt had directed his attention to his daughter. The humiliated

millionnaire thanked him, and then told his servant to bring Miss Burnett after him. The accidental encounter with Easton had decided where the interview he meditated should take place.

Now that she was before him, the unreasoning passion which he felt at the thought that she was the primary cause of his exposure quickened the sense of his humiliation, and made him feel disposed to hate her. So, much of his old cold sternness returned to him.

At the same time Sarah's consciousness of how little she merited unkind treatment from him stirred the pride of her heart, and did more to restore her self-possession than anything else she could have done.

At this point there was little amiability, and no sympathy, in the regards which father and daughter fixed on each other.

'Circumstances have violently altered my plans,' said the millionaire at length, in a dry, severe tone. 'You have been

defrauded of your birthright, of your name, and the position you should have occupied. That shall be amended in so far that from 'this date forth you are Sarah Cargill—the name, the fortune, all that I have to give, is yours.'

'Oh, sir, I——'

'Be silent, or at least reserve your thanks until you know how far they are merited. Understand me: all that I am now doing is done under compulsion, and, had circumstances permitted; my daughter Kate would never have been dragged from the position I had given her to change places with you.'

'I understand you, sir,' replied Sarah quietly. 'The act by which you deprived me of what belongs to me was a cruel and a guilty one; but I know that, once committed, you had no alternative but to carry out the deception to the end. Your position is too prominent to have permitted a voluntary restitution of my rights, and in my

heart I wish that it had been possible to save your name from ignominy at the cost of any wrong to me.'

This answer surprised the father, and agreeably, although he concealed his satisfaction, and continued coldly as before :

'I have no right to your affection or esteem—I do not expect either ; but deference and obedience I demand. At the age of thirty-nine, when my father died, I could not recall one occasion on which I had contradicted him, or interrupted him when he was speaking, as you have done—or of having passed judgment on his acts, as you have done on mine. These are facts for you to remember. Enough of them for the present. By to-morrow that portion of Mavisbank House which was formerly occupied by your mother will be prepared for your reception. Carriages and servants will be placed at your command, with such an allowance as will enable you to maintain your position. What introductions I may still be able to

give, you shall have ; and as soon as this trial is over we will proceed to the Continent until time has, in some degree, smoothed the memory of this scandal. I need not warn you to be circumspect in your conduct, as you will be the object of innumerable curious and impertinent attentions. You will feel that for yourself, and you will act accordingly. What education have you received ?

‘Sufficiently good, sir, to prevent me disgracing the high position in which you wish to place me,’ she rejoined modestly.

‘Can you ride ?’

‘No, sir ; not at all. But if necessary I will be a perfect horsewoman in six months, or break my neck.’

‘It is necessary to become a horsewoman and break nothing. These are trivial things, and can easily be managed. But what cannot be managed easily is to enable you to bear against this horrible disgrace so that you obtain the proper respect due to your

position. With that we must deal as events shall dictate. A coward might send you abroad and hide his own head anywhere from the gaze of the world. But I am no coward, and I will brave the shame my own act has brought upon me. You shall suffer no longer for my guilt. To begin with, you shall accompany me now to Mavisbank, and I will openly present you to the household as Miss Cargill.'

The old man, proud still, even in his disgrace, had spoken with growing warmth in his resolution boldly to meet all the scorn that might be cast upon him. He rose from his seat and approached the bell, as if about to order the carriage at once for the journey to Mavisbank House.

Sarah intervened.

She had listened to her father with vision dazzled by the brilliance of the prospect he held out to her. It was to her the grand transformation scene effected by the magic of a fairy's wand, from the straits and

troubles of petty respectability to the ease and magnificence of unlimited wealth. But she kept strict guard upon her visage, and revealed nothing of the real delight with which she viewed the future. She listened with an air of sorrow, as if the position were forced upon her against her will.

‘Will you permit me to say something, sir, before you summon your servant?’

‘As you please.’

‘Then first, sir, believe me, I feel the generosity with which you are prepared to sacrifice your own feelings for my sake; I feel it more than I can tell you. I am sensible of the many advantages you are about to confer upon me, although I would have enjoyed them more had they cost you less. I had no expectation of being received by you in this generous way, and therefore your proposition—or perhaps I should say your commands—falling upon me so suddenly, and requiring such a total change in my life, confuse me a little, and render it

difficult for me to see at once what course duty requires me to follow.'

'Your duty is to obey me.'

'Do not be angry with me, sir,' she said meekly, and drooping her eyes respectfully before his stern regard, 'but you cannot—you must not forget that I have formed other ties before I was aware that I owed you any duty; and these ties make some demand upon me, even as I know there are ties which make some demand upon you. The unhappy revelation of my true position has been violent and wretched enough, without our making it more violent by new injustice to others.'

'You speak boldly,' replied Mr. Cargill, with some asperity.

'I hope not, sir. I hope I am only speaking truth which you must feel as well as myself.'

With a curt motion of the head he seemed to bid her proceed.

'I trust you will see that, sir; at any

rate, I will try to show you that it is as much my respect for you as any other sentiment which urges me to speak.' Sarah was gaining confidence as she went on, for, despite his evident impatience, she saw that he was impressed by the simple earnestness of her manner.

He offered her no word of encouragement, however. He sat with his thin lips closed tightly, and brows knit, watching her narrowly.

'You will forgive me, sir,' she continued in a subdued respectful manner, 'if I begin by reminding you of—of Kate—my sister.'

He started, then inclined his head, without speaking,

'In your wish to repair the wrong done to me, you are—pardon me, sir, if the words seem disrespectful—you are forgetting what is due to her. You would take me to Mavisbank and present me to your household as Miss Cargill, the future mistress of the establishment. By doing so, can you

not see in what a disagreeable position you place me with regard to her ? You submit her to the unpleasant comments and impertinent gaze of the few who may be from any cause indifferent to her—there can be none who positively dislike her—and you submit me to the not less unpleasant contempt of the many who have good reason to love and respect her.'

'There are none who dare question my decision,' he said drily.

'Perhaps not, sir ; but there are a thousand ways in which people may show contempt for me without openly questioning your decision. But to that I can be wholly indifferent. All that people might look, or think, or say, I could pass unheeded, but I know that Kate could not. She would fret under it, and blame herself for anything that I might have to suffer. When people pointed to me as the mistress of the house—as one who had rushed into her position with the eagerness of a victor into a conquered fort—

she would smart under it, because she has a good generous heart and would know that I was blamed in proportion as she was loved.'

'And are you afraid of what people may say of you in reclaiming your proper position?' he asked with a degree of contempt.

'No, sir, I am not afraid of what anybody might say or think; but I am afraid of what I might feel myself. And I know that were I to rush into your house I should feel like a vicious creature, that, happening to obtain a little strength, snatched at the nest of some simple bird and destroyed it. I am afraid of feeling that, sir, and until I know that my sister Kate is to be regarded as my equal in name and fortune—in all things—I will not, even for your command, sir, which I should be sorry to oppose, move from my present position.'

Again Mr. Cargill was surprised, and agreeably so. These were generous words, spoken by one who had been grievously

wronged, and from whom they could least have been expected. The bright flush on her pale face indicated the depth of her sincerity. Kate was very dear to him ; and if Sarah had been trying to gain his affection and esteem, she could not have taken any more effectual method than this.

Kate herself, who, with hands clasped on her knees, was listening to it all, was deeply touched by the expression of Sarah's sympathy.

'Be satisfied,' said Mr. Cargill in a softer tone than he had yet used, although masking the comfort he experienced in her words—'be satisfied'; Kate shall be cared for as tenderly as you could wish. But how her future conduct may be regulated I cannot say until this unhappy trial is over.'

'Ah, sir !' exclaimed Sarah, with hands moving nervously, as if she longed to clasp her father round the neck and hug him to her heart, 'you cannot know how much relief you have given me. You have, too,

supplied me with one of the strongest arguments for delaying my removal to Mavisbank as your daughter. I know how much my sister has at stake in this terrible trial——'

'You know !' he interrupted, half rising from his chair in alarm.

'Yes, she told me herself to-day ; and when you know how deeply I feel the trouble that has befallen her, you will not—you cannot ask me to add to her grief by any act of mine, or any act of yours that I may prevent.'

'Yes—yes,' he muttered, shading his eyes with his hand.

'There is one more argument, sir, why I should remain as I am for a little while. Mrs. Burnett——'

'Ah !' The ejaculation was sharp and spasmodic ; it indicated that all these years of separation had not wholly extinguished the power of the man's fatal passion.

'Mrs. Burnett, the mother of Catherine,

and whom I have regarded and loved as my own until within a very few days'—Sarah's voice faltered here, and Mr. Cargill still shaded his eyes—'she is lying at the point of death. Would you have me neglect the sacred duty which calls me to her side at such a time as the present? Surely not, sir.'

'Sarah!' exclaimed Mr. Cargill, under his breath; and his chin sank on his breast as he leaned back on his chair, thinking of the past, which had been resuscitated with so much bitterness.

'She has done me grievous harm, deceived me when I trusted most,' he muttered, replying to his own thoughts; 'she has marred my life, and made my age a shame. But am I to be implicated? She is dying—dying under the horrible disgrace which has fallen on Kate—our child, and through me alone the disgrace exists. At this hour what consolation might not a word from me bring her?'

He rose hastily to his feet.

‘I will go with you.’

Sarah seemed to be alarmed by this unexpected proposition.

‘You, sir? Ah, no. Do not make yourself a witness of a spectacle that would trouble you always. Mrs.-Burnett lives, perhaps; but all sense, every faculty of the mind has vanished. She could never recognise you, nor hear; and even if the past were so potent that your voice might recall her to consciousness, even for a moment, it would only be to kill her, sir; for the shock would be much too great for her feeble frame to endure a moment after.’

The tears in Sarah’s eyes seemed to fascinate the man, and softened him towards her more even than her generous self-denial had done. He breathed with difficulty, and, extending his hands, he drew her slowly to his side, then kissed her affectionately on the brow.

‘Go then, alone, my child; and give me

early tidings whether she is better or worse.'

'Thank you,' she said, in a low tremulous tone, affected by the address 'my child;' and drawing a long breath, she added: '*my father.*'

There was a brief pause, during which the choking sobs of Kate would surely have been heard by Sarah, had her own thoughts and feelings been a degree less absorbed.

'You are a good girl, I think,' said Mr. Cargill slowly, 'and I may yet learn to be grateful that my sin has received its punishment, since I have found you.'

'It shall not be my fault if you do not, father,' she answered simply. 'But for the present, my place is by the side of her who has been as a mother to me.'

A soft hand was laid upon her arm as she spoke, and turning her head quickly she looked into the tearful eyes of Kate.

'Your place is here, Sarah,' said the

sweet voice ; ‘ *my* place is by the bed of my dying mother.’

But, indeed, it seemed as if she needed some one to nurse her rather than she should nurse another, for she was so weakened by the mental and physical suffering she had undergone that she had only tottered across the room to speak, and at the moment she would have fallen had not Sarah’s strong protecting arm encircled her waist, and supported her to a chair.

‘ You must not think of that, Kate,’ she said, in a low firm voice ; ‘ you are quite unfit for such a task. You have already suffered too much. For Alick Tavendale’s sake, for your father’s and for mine, you must not kill yourself outright—nay, you shall not.’

‘ But my mother—my own mother is dying !’ cried Kate, sobbing bitterly ; ‘ and I must go to her—I must speak to her.’

‘ Alas ! that is impossible for the present,’ interrupted Sarah, trying to soften the pain

she was compelled to cause; 'you could not help her, and you would only add to your own distress. Dear Kate, you have been in the room—you have heard me. You know that I love you; yield to me in this, then—at least, until you have obtained rest, or until I am able to send you tidings that you may come.'

'Sarah is right,' said Mr. Cargill huskily; 'you must remain with me for the present.'

'To-morrow——' began Sarah.

'Ah, to-morrow,' interrupted Kate, wringing her hands, and raising her sad sweet face, as if in appeal to Heaven—'to-morrow she may be dead.'

Sarah looked distressfully to her father, and he paced the floor, glancing frequently at Kate with an expression of intense fear and pain. At length he halted, and spoke resolutely :

'Kate, you must submit to me in this. Your strength has been taxed far too much, and I begin to fear for your own safety.'

You must go home with me to-night ; and to-morrow, if you are strong enough, I will myself take you to your mother.'

Sarah made no comment upon this, but it was evident by the quick shade which flitted across her brow that she either did not approve of the arrangement, or doubted whether their coming on the morrow would be of advantage to any of them.

Kate tried to stifle her sobs and dry her eyes, then feebly she placed her hand in her father's in token of submission. She did not even refer to her desire to see her husband that night, for she had become anxious for strength to accomplish the work of the morrow.

Mr. Cargill ordered the carriage; and the brougham which had brought Kate to the city conveyed Sarah to Hill Street, whilst her father and sister were driven to Mavisbank.

CHAPTER XXIV.

A MEDICAL OPINION.

SARAH would have been scarcely human if her interest in Mrs. Burnett had been so intense as to exclude all other thoughts and sentiments save those appropriate to the death-bed of a frail creature who had sinned and who had been punished,

The woman had wronged her deeply; and now that the restoration to her rights was at hand, she could not altogether repress the sense of exultation. She could not help, as she was being driven along in the brougham, lounging back on the soft seat, experiencing a warm glow of satisfaction at the thought that in a few days this vehicle would be at her command, with every

luxury her heart could desire. It was a dazzling prospect to one who, although unacquainted with positive want, had been compelled to let many little wishes go ungratified, and who had been compelled to learn the lesson of self-denial—it was a dazzling prospect for her, that in which pinching and calculation would be wholly unnecessary—when she would only have to wish to possess.

But when the carriage stopped at the house in Hill Street she had commanded her features to grave calmness ; her eyes were a little brighter than usual, but that was the only indication of the pleasure she felt when she entered the house of death. The girl Susan had opened the door, and gazed in open-mouthed wonder at the grand conveyance in which her young mistress had arrived as it drove away.

‘Has anyone been here for me?’ asked Sarah, as she passed into the parlour.

‘Yes, miss ; Mr. Hewitt was here, and seemed to be very anxious to see you.’

A sudden shade of trouble, or alarm it might even have been called, flitted across Sarah’s visage, and she spoke quickly:

‘Why did he not wait?’

‘He said he couldn’t ; but he’ll come back sometime this afternoon, when he must see you.’

Sarah seemed to draw a quick breath, and then, as she proceeded to divest herself of bonnet and cloak, said quietly :

‘Has the doctor called?’

‘He came just after you went out, and he did not look as though he was pleased with the state of the poor mistress. He came back again, and he’s there now.’

‘Very well ; I’ll go to him. If Mr. Hewitt returns you can bring him in here, and call me.’

On entering the invalid’s chamber Sarah, with a quick glance, observed that no change for the better had taken place

during her absence; indeed rather the reverse.

Mrs. Burnett lay on her back, her eyes closed, and the once fine features so sharp and rigid that but for the occasional spasms which passed over them, and over the whole body, one might have thought her already dead. But even with these pitiable indications of life, the face was so white and clammy with the perspiration of pain that it was more like death than life.

Everywhere in the chamber were the signs of a severe illness: the close atmosphere, the many phials on the mantelpiece and the table, the basins and sponges, and the paper-covered glass in which lay half a dozen leeches.

By the head of the patient stood a woman of middle age—a nurse whom Dr. Mitchell had insisted upon calling in to the assistance of Sarah. The doctor himself was seated beside the bed, holding the patient's

wrist, and watching her with a gloomy expression. He rose as Sarah entered.

‘At last you have come,’ he said gravely, shaking her hand.

‘I was detained much longer than I expected,’ she answered, as if feeling the necessity of an explanation. Then, watching him anxiously, she added, in a trembling voice, ‘Is she any better?’

The doctor shook his head despondingly.

‘She is worse,’ he responded reluctantly. ‘These spasms have recurred with alarming frequency since morning, and all that I have been able to do has failed to check them.’

He stopped; Sarah had gripped his arm, and turned her eyes to the invalid, who had moved and uttered a low moan.

‘She has heard you.’

‘I wish she had,’ replied the doctor, ‘for that would be the best possible symptom. We shall see.’

He advanced to Mrs. Burnett, and, taking her wrist again, he felt the pulse,

whilst he watched her with the profoundest attention. Then he gently raised the lid of one of the eyes.

The eye was glazed and stony, reflecting no ray of intelligence.

‘Judge for yourself,’ he said, in a low voice; ‘take her hand and speak to her. Your voice will rouse her, if any human sound can.’

Sarah, with a cold shudder, approached as directed, took the nerveless hand in hers, and bending down so that her mouth was close to the ear of the invalid, murmured :

‘Mother, it is me, Sarah—your own Sarah. Speak to me—give me some sign that you hear.’ But the features remained rigid; not the faintest breath or sign betokened intelligence.

‘You see,’ said the doctor, after a long pause, during which the signal of hope was eagerly looked for, ‘I told you how it was.’

‘My poor mother!’ exclaimed Sarah, low and huskily. ‘Is she in pain, sir?’

‘At this moment, no.’

During this trial the nurse had passed over to the fireplace, and after looking at the little gold watch which hung on a mahogany stand, proceeded quietly to prepare a mixture from one of the phials. She touched the doctor on the shoulder, and he took the glass from her. Then he desired Sarah to stand aside whilst he endeavoured to coax the draught down the insensible invalid’s throat. He told her that he was about to administer a powerful potion, and that if it failed, he could do nothing more.

Sarah, as if willing to escape the spectacle of the administration of this forlorn hope, passed over to the window, not sobbing or uttering any sound, but gently wiping her eyes with her handkerchief.

Then she looked out upon the street, and saw the lamplighter speeding on his task, and as the jets of light sparkled forth on the pavement, she saw men and women

hurrying on their various ways. It seemed strange that none paused to look at the house where the last act of the sad tragedy of a life was being played out.

What else did she think about whilst the woman who had wronged her, and who had yet given her so many proofs of maternal tenderness, lay there dying? Did she regret her? Did she not think of the brilliant future which had that day been opened to her, and upon which she was so speedily to enter? Who can tell?

She turned quickly at the sound of the doctor's voice.

'She has swallowed it; that is so far good. If in four hours she has not made any movement, we will give her another draught of the same potion. If in four hours after that she has still shown no sign of consciousness, we will give her a third, and then——'

'And then?' said Sarah quickly, as the doctor paused.

He made no answer, but slightly turned away his face from her eager inquiring eyes.

‘I understand your silence, doctor,’ she murmured brokenly, ‘for I remember that even when you first saw her you said she was lost.’

‘Scientifically, yes, perhaps. But I do not despair even yet.’ He was evidently speaking rather to soothe the daughter’s affliction than out of any great faith he had in the result of his labours. ‘Only last year I witnessed a case of paralysis almost exactly similar to this. A great and sudden calamity occurred—the man was stricken down; and yet, after lying for more than a week in an insensible condition, he recovered, and is alive yet, although he has lost the use of his left side, and his mind is somewhat weakened.’

‘Ah, that is what I dread almost as much as her death, that she should live, and yet be dead to us. But is there no hope that she will recover, even for a little

while—recover sufficiently to be able to recognise those around her, and speak to them, however briefly ?’

Sarah put the question with strange eagerness—the eagerness not so much of dread that such an event was beyond hope, but rather of some inexplicable fear that it was *not* beyond hope. This peculiarity of manner was very slight, however ; it was not observed at all by the doctor, and it was doubtless produced by the peculiarly mixed feelings of her present position in regard to the dying woman.

‘It is not easy to say,’ rejoined the doctor thoughtfully. ‘This malady sometimes disappoints the most careful calculations one way or the other. To-morrow she may be attacked with delirium, which might give her mind temporary strength.’

‘Then she would speak ?’

‘Certainly ; but that state would not heighten the prospect of her recovery.’

‘And—and would she have reason—I

mean intelligence enough to recognise any-one—to remember anything of the past ?’

‘ Very possibly,’ replied the doctor, eying his questioner curiously ; ‘ but why do you ask ?’

‘ Because I wish her to see Mr. Cargill and his daughter Catherine,’ returned Sarah quickly, ‘ and one word from her to him would serve me greatly.’

‘ I understand.’ Dr. Mitchell was a friend of Mr. Hewitt’s, and had been made acquainted with the main facts of Sarah’s circumstances. ‘ Well, I can promise you nothing. The probability is as strong against you as for you. But do not leave her, for if sense does return, it may be no more than a flash, which will vanish immediately. You must try to profit by it, brief as it may be.’

‘ Thank you.’

‘ I have three visits to make,’ he added, looking at his watch. ‘ I will come back about twelve o’clock.’

The doctor departed, and Sarah, with troubled brow, took the seat he had lately occupied by the bedside. Mechanically her eyes followed the noiseless movements of the nurse, and then reverted to the white clammy face on the bed, from which they quickly started again, as if the sight were too much for her to bear.

She seemed to sit there rather as in stern submission to duty than one swayed by the love which lingers over the last moments of the loved one, and holds the last moments more precious than gold. By-and-by she began to look anxiously at the watch on the mantelpiece, and as the hours passed a shade of impatience overspread her countenance, and did not leave it until, just after ten o'clock struck, Susan brought her the intelligence that Mr. Hewitt had arrived, and was waiting in the parlour.

CHAPTER XXV.

A BAD LOOK-OUT.

MR. HEWITT was sitting in the corner of the parlour farthest from the door. One leg was crossed over the other, his arms were folded on his breast, and his hat was drawn down over his nose, whilst he leaned back on the chair.

The attitude was much the same as that of a defiant member of Parliament listening to a severe exposure of his own failings. It was a singular attitude for one of his placid nature ; for he was reputed to be such a very steady gentleman, and so self-possessed, that nothing short of an earthquake could have drawn emotion from him, and not even an earthquake would have roused him to any display of passion.

Yet here he was in a decidedly melodramatic attitude, as if prepared to defy fate itself; and when Sarah softly entered the room, and closed the door after her, he threw up his hat with a jerk, revealing a face flushed as with chagrin and rage.

Sarah had seen much more of the inner character of her betrothed than anyone else—except, perhaps, his mother, and even she had been surprised by his conduct of late—even she thought that something like an earthquake had happened, or was about to happen immediately, and that its rumbling was already sounding up from the depths underground.

Sarah halted when she had reached the centre of the apartment, and gazed upon him inquiringly.

For an instant he seemed abashed by her gaze, and half ashamed of his bearing of mock-heroic despair; then he sprang to his feet. One stride brought him to her side. He seized her in his arms, and gave her

a somewhat rough spasmodic sort of hug.

As if he were half ashamed of that, too, he released her instantly, and retired a pace, with hands clasped tightly behind him, apparently thinking it necessary to hold them fast there, lest he should be tempted to repeat the embrace.

During all this Sarah had only continued to stare at him, trying vainly to discover whether she might attribute his strange conduct to an unusual indulgence in drink, or to some calamity.

‘Don’t look at me that way,’ he said, avoiding her eyes. ‘I’m half crazed as it is, and you’ll make me whole crazed presently if you go on staring.’

His voice was husky, and scarcely raised above a whisper, but it was perfectly distinct ; and his manner showed drink was not the cause of his condition.

She laid her hand on his shoulder, and in her slow firm way, that had

something of masculine self-possession in it, said :

‘What is the matter, Laurence ? Did I do or say anything wrong to-day ?’

‘No, no—not so far as I know,’ he responded, changing his position uneasily ; ‘you did everything as it should have been done, and said everything as it should have been said, so far as I saw and heard. That’s not it.’

There was bitterness in his tone, and she was still more perplexed.

‘Sit down there, and I will tell you all that I did and said when you neither saw nor heard. ‘Sit down.’

He obeyed awkwardly, and she took a seat by his side. Then she narrated all that had occurred at the Royal George, without omitting the slightest detail.

She spoke with the intention of relieving him and giving him time to collect himself. She achieved her object completely, for the cloud cleared from his brow as she pro-

ceeded to state how freely and promptly her father had decided upon restoring her to her true position. But the cloud gathered again when she told him how, for propriety's sake, she had desired a slight delay in the open declaration of her birthright, and how her father had acquiesced.

‘That was all as I expected it would be,’ he said, with a breath of relief when she had finished; ‘all as I expected, but not the delay. Still, even that may be managed.’

He added the words reflectively, as one who is seeking a way out of a difficulty.

‘It could not have been arranged otherwise without much annoyance to me, and some doubt being cast upon me. I do not see what there is to be managed.’

Quiet and most business-like her tone, without the slightest note of passion that might betoken love.

‘Umph! everything has to be managed,

and particularly so at this stage of our affairs.'

'Explain, if you please, as that will doubtless enable me to understand your singular excitement.'

'Singular, indeed, you may call it; but you—only you—have seen it. None other ever could; and even from you it would have been hidden, were it not that we are bound together by ties that no power on earth can break. No power—save death.'

It would have astonished the gentleman's clients and the officers of the court if any of them had obtained a glimpse of the livid passion on grave respectable Mr. Hewitt's visage at that moment. Even Sarah shrank slightly from him; there was something so terrible—something so *deadly* in his expression.

'I never saw you like this before,' she said in calm rebuke, recovering from her momentary timidity.

'No, and never will again, I hope; for

I have nerves of iron, Sarah, and can bind down my tongue and face, although my heart be bursting. No, you never shall see me like this again—so don't trouble yourself about it; only it is rather hard when one's finger-tips are touching a great, a grand prize, to see the prospect of some contemptible little hitch in one's arrangements snatching it away for ever, without being permitted to vent one's heartache in a groan.'

'Yes, it is hard; but, you see, I do not understand you yet.'

'No, of course not. I will explain. I have told you that I am in debt. I am deeply in debt, and yet my wide circle of respected patrons would swear that I am incapable of owing any man a farthing; but I do owe a good many farthings.'

'Yes,' slowly and thoughtfully.

'But they must not know it. None must know it but you and I, and my debtors. Well, I have made some unlucky specula-

tions on '—on the turf he was going to say, but altered his mind—' on various promising affairs which have failed. Now, there's one old fellow—a Christian, but harder than any Jew I ever heard of—who lent me a couple of thousands for these speculations. He is not a nice character; he has a good deal to do with betting and that sort of thing, and to be known to be connected with him would be utter ruin to me, and would do you no good, if it did not do you some harm.'

'Well, do not let your difficulty be known.'

'Yes, but there's the bother. The infernal fellow wants his money—wants it now, and must have it by twelve o'clock to-morrow, or else he will expose me.'

Sarah's dark lashes drooped over her eyes, and he watched her intently.

'Well?' she said at length.

'Well,' he echoed impatiently, 'you see the scrape; can you think of no excuse

by which you could get Cargill to advance that sum at once ?’

‘None at present ; but by half-past eleven to-morrow I shall have found some means of meeting the difficulty.’

Hewitt, with another stiff spasmodic movement, hugged her to his breast. She disengaged herself gently, and said, in a low but less hard voice than before :

‘There is a probability that Mrs. Burnett will recover consciousness, and speak, before she dies.’

Hewitt started, and livid passion flashed in his face again. He rose, paced the floor, then sat down, and they talked together for an hour.

CHAPTER XXVI.

UNDER THE SHADOW.

At half-past ten on the following morning Mr. Cargill arrived with Kate at the house in Hill Street.

They were about to be conducted to the parlour, but the millionaire desired to be taken at once to the invalid's chamber. They were at the door, when it opened suddenly, and Sarah appeared. She closed the door behind her, keeping her hand upon it whilst she motioned the visitors back with an expression of terror on her face.

The movement of Sarah's hand, the expression of her face, and the quivering of her lips affected Mr. Cargill and Kate as with a shock of terror; for to them these

signs seemed to declare at once that they had arrived too late; and they drew back accordingly, alarmed and silent.

The millionaire, already overwhelmed with the sharp pangs of the shame that had come upon him, was at first like one stupefied. He was confused by Sarah's signal, or rather by his own interpretation of it, and he felt stunned with an undefinable sense of a great and unexpected loss.

Kate only clung the more tightly to her father's arm, and gazed with weary anxious eyes at Sarah.

'Is she—is she gone?' asked Mr. Cargill presently, in a quivering voice.

'No, not yet,' answered Sarah, in a whisper. Her bearing was collected, although her eyes were very red. There was no danger of any outburst of grief on her part; whatever she felt, she held it down. Her grief was not for the common eye to gaze on.

'Not yet,' echoed Kate feebly, whilst her

bonny fawn's eyes lighted with a gleam of hope. 'Ah, then, we are not too late. I will see her—she will speak to me.'

She stopped, observing Sarah's head moving slowly in token of sad negative.

'Alas ! no, Kate ; I am afraid you hope for too much. Try, try, my sister, to find strength. I cannot, I dare not hide the truth from you—it would be useless.'

'Speak.'

'She is still insensible ; the doctor has no hope that she will be able to speak or recognise anybody before—before she passes away.'

Sarah turned away her head, as she quietly drew her handkerchief across her eyes.

Kate and her father drew breath ; and then the latter, whilst he gently patted the head which sank hopelessly on his shoulder, spoke with the air of one who rises calmly above a sea of troubled emotion, rendered almost insensible to his own pain by the spectacle of others' sorrow.

‘We came, Sarah Cargill, as soon as your messenger reached us. I trust you have not, out of any mistaken kindness, delayed sending until every chance of Kate obtaining one look from her mother is lost?’

Sarah seemed to be distressed even by the very mild reproach his words implied.

‘I have watched all night, sir—watched without ceasing for any glimpse of returning consciousness. I kept the messenger ready, so that at the first sign I might send for you. But she is now in the same state as she was yesterday morning, and as she has continued to be ever since. I sent for you this morning because the doctor has, for the fourth time, administered a powerful stimulant, in the faint hope that it may revive her for even a moment.’

‘When will the success or failure be known?’

‘By twelve o’clock; it is now half-past eleven—two hours and a half since the draught was administered, and only a few

minutes now will suffice to show the result.'

'Perhaps I had better see her at once,' said Mr. Cargill, after a moment's reflection. 'The sound of my voice may help the doctor's drug in its work. If she can hear at all, if she retains the least sense, my voice will rouse her.'

Sarah stepped from the door, with a look of doubt and dissatisfaction.

'You can try, sir, if you think so; but I would rather that you waited till twelve o'clock—besides, I desire to speak to you immediately on a subject of great importance to myself.'

Mr. Cargill had taken a step toward the door; but, as frequently happens with men of stern nature, the calamity which had befallen him had left him weak and indecisive, so that when Sarah suggested that he should wait, he hesitated. Formerly, he would have decided yea or nay in an instant, and waived all opposition aside.

‘ You want to speak to me,’ he said, faltering, and looking wistfully at the door ; ‘ what is it ?’

‘ One moment, sir, and I will explain.’

She went into the sick-room, noiselessly opening and closing the door.

Mr. Cargill turned his eyes sadly to Kate. She had sunk on a sofa, and her head was drooping on her breast. She had slept little during the night, and it seemed as if the intense suffering her cruel position induced would prove too much for her feeble constitution. Her husband in gaol, with the shadow of the gallows looming darkly over him, and her mother on the threshold of death, without one word or look for her child—it did indeed seem as if the burden were too great for her young shoulders to bear.

That was the thought which flashed through the man’s mind as he looked at her now ; and it added another drop of gall to his already bitter cup.

Sarah returned.

‘There is no change yet,’ she said, hastily answering his inquiring gaze. ‘If Catherine will remain here, the doctor will acquaint her when Mrs. Burnett makes the least movement.’

A motion of the head was all the token Kate gave of assent.

‘Will you come with me, sir, and I shall explain the matter I referred to?’

And Sarah, with a soft sigh and a pitying sympathetic glance toward her sister, conducted her father to the parlour.

He sat down, as weak and helpless almost as Kate herself, and with a vacant hopeless look in his pale sunken eyes.

‘Tell me what it is you wish, Sarah,’ he said abstractedly; ‘but be as short as you can, and if anything can wait for a—for a few days, spare me the trouble of listening to it now.’

Sarah silently bowed her head, and her eyelids with their long black lashes drooped over her eyes. She took a letter from her

pocket, read it, and then crumpled it in her hand, as if it had annoyed her. Then in a low steady voice :

‘ Yesterday, sir, when you told me that your wealth, your name, and all that you had to give were at my disposal, I refused to accept anything for the present.’

‘ Yes,’ he answered mechanically.

‘ I must withdraw that refusal—I must ask your help. Believe me, sir, it is not on account of myself that I do this, but for another.’

‘ What other ?’

‘ I will spare you all details at present, sir, as you desired ; indeed, it is better that it should be so—better that I should not explain why I am compelled to ask you to help me, at least until—until Mrs. Burnett——’

He winced, for he divined that the ‘ other’ on whose account Sarah spoke was the dying woman. In that way he finished the broken sentence.

‘What help do you want?’ he said huskily; ‘tell me that, and leave explanations for another time.’

She hesitated, and then with sudden resolution, ‘I want you, sir, to give me two thousand pounds.’

He looked up with a ray of the keen business man’s curiosity in his eyes.

‘What for?’

‘I thought you did not care to know why just now. Shall I tell you?’

A timid knock at the door, and the girl Susan appeared.

‘You’re wanted, miss, if you please.’

‘Coming in a moment.’ The girl retired, and Sarah went on: ‘It is a matter which may——’

‘There, there,’ he interrupted, ‘I don’t want to know anything about it—perhaps she has recovered consciousness now. Let us go to her. When do you want this money?’

‘Now.’

‘I have no cheque-book with me. I will send it to you this evening.’

‘I have got a stamp, sir, and you can write an order for it. The man to whom it must be paid will be here before three o’clock.’

He wrote the order hastily, placed it in Sarah’s hand, and hurried with her back to Kate.

As they entered the room the door of the bedroom opened, and the doctor beckoned to them.

‘She has moved,’ he whispered ; ‘she may recover for an instant before the end. If you wish to see her alive you had better come in now.’

Sarah’s lips closed tightly as with a spasm ; Kate started to her feet, and clutching her father’s arm, was supported by him into the sick-room. It was a pitiable first meeting with a mother insensible, and past all hope of restoration to the world—a first and last meeting, in which the grief of a life was concentrated.

Kate closed her eyes ; the first glance at the haggard corpse-like face on the bed made her heart bound as if it were about to burst. It seemed to rise to her throat, choking her, and she could not speak, or cry, or look.

Her father held her tightly to keep her from falling, whilst he with horror-stricken visage gazed dumbly on the wreck of the woman he had once so madly loved.

CHAPTER XXVII.

RECOGNITIONS.

SARAH advanced to the bed, and taking the attenuated hand of the dying woman, looked earnestly into the clammy face. Then she turned away with subdued sobs.

The sound of Sarah's grief roused Kate. She opened her eyes, and there was in them a wild dazed expression. Then, with a sharp cry of pain, she sprang to the bed and threw her arms round the body, no pulse of which throbbed at her touch or voice.

‘Mother—mother ! it is I, your child—your own child ! Speak to me one word—give me one look before you leave me !’

But there was not the faintest movement,

and the daughter's head sank on the mother's breast, with bitter tears and sobs.

Slowly, and with the bearing of one in a dream, Mr. Cargill approached the bed, and the nurse moved away to make room for him by the invalid's head. Gently he took the moist hand between his own—still in a dreamy half-unconscious manner. But as soon as he had pressed it earnestly, something seemed to quicken him to a recognition of the position in which he stood, and, bending down, he spoke fondly in the woman's ear :

‘Sarah—Sarah!! can you not hear me? Has my voice no power to pierce this cruel insensibility? Sarah, it is I, Robert Cargill, who speak to you.’

There was no immediate sign that she heard or understood anything; and the stillness of the chamber of death was broken only by Kate's sobs.

‘Sarah,’ he said again, and his voice trembled this time—‘can you not hear me

yet? Sarah—give me some sign that you know me!’

Another brief space of breathless waiting for the sign, and it came. As if the voice had travelled a long way to reach her, several minutes had elapsed when the hand he was holding trembled, and then the fingers closed on his with spasmodic force, and as if she feared to lose it. The muscles of the face quivered, and she drew breath quick and gaspingly.

At last the eyes—dull dazed eyes with no light of intellect in them—were slowly opened. But they rested neither upon the yearning face of Kate, nor the worn despairing countenance of the millionaire. Quite vacantly they stared straight up at the canopy of the bed, and what thought the sound of his voice had recalled had wandered away to the old time, years and years ago.

‘She may recover yet,’ said Sarah, clutching the doctor’s arm eagerly.

He shook his head gloomily. He could give no encouragement to such hope as that.

‘ She may speak ; she may even recognise you and her friends yet ; but it is only the last flash of the light before it sinks altogether.’

Her lips were moving even now, as if she were trying to speak ; and there was a hoarse suffocating sound in her throat at every breath, as if something there stopped the passage of air, and intimated how near was the end.

The doctor moistened her lips with some liquid, and it seemed to soothe her. The lips moved more freely after that, and Mr. Cargill bent his ear close to them and listened eagerly to discover what they were trying to say. At last he thought the words were :

‘ Where is she—she—*my* child ?’

‘ She is here.’

His voice seemed to have more effect

upon her this time than before, and her brows became feebly knit as if she were trying vainly to recollect something. But the shade passed in an instant, leaving the visage clammy and blank again, with the big vacant eyes staring upward. She repeated her question, however, and now it was loud enough for the others to hear.

‘Here is your daughter,’ said Mr. Cargill huskily, and placing Kate’s hand in her mother’s.

Mrs. Burnett feebly drew her hand away, and the lips moved as with repugnance.

‘No, no! my own child—my baby,’ she said, in a feverish whisper, which became stronger as she proceeded—‘my baby that he wanted to take from me. Where is she? He did not get her—I would have it—I would not give him my child. Oh, he was cruel, cruel, and I loved him so!—but he did not get my child—no, no.’

‘Alas! she is still delirious,’ sobbed Sarah.

‘Was he not cruel in his love?’ Mrs. Burnett went on, with her sad glazed eyes peering into the dark past. ‘He said I deceived him—I, who loved him more than my own happiness—I, who sacrificed everything that a woman cares about, for his sake! Cruel, cruel!’

If she could only have seen how the old man’s head was bowed in shame and remorse—if she could only have guessed how every word stung him to the quick as he stood there listening and humbled!

‘He called me false,’ she moaned—‘false; and he pointed to my own brother as the man for whom I had deceived him.’

‘Your brother!’ he cried, struck with a new pain.

As if she had heard and comprehended that he was near, she slowly made answer:

‘Ay, my own brother, who had come back from India with wealth to offer me a home, and who, discovering what I had become, spurned me from him. And

Robert, too, he would not listen, he would not accept any explanation. He called me false, and he, too, spurned me. My God, my God ! I was punished for loving that man !’

Her voice faded away as the millionaire shrank back in horror at the denunciation of his own iniquity, at the revelation of the double wrong he had done her.

Her breathing became more rapid and difficult, and as life ebbed from her the memory of years of suffering flashed through her mind, bringing a momentary flush to the white cheeks, making them look so like life that it was hard to believe death was so near.

‘I have waited, Robert, waited a long while—years, it seems to me, I have waited for your coming. Will you never come again ?’

‘Ay, Sarah, I am with you now,’ faltered the man, giving her his hand.

‘At last,’ she said, but without moving

her body or looking at him ; and although she addressed him, it seemed rather as if she saw him at a great distance from her than as if she were conscious that he was standing by her side—‘ at last you have come, after all this waiting ; but you are not going to take my child from me ? No, you will not do that ; for I cannot take another’s to my arms and fondle it, and be kind to it, whilst I have been robbed of my own—not even when you wish to do it that our child may obtain a high position in the world. What do I care for position ! My child is all the world to me.’

‘ She is here beside you now. Can you not see her ?’

‘ Alas, alas !’ cried the unhappy woman, as if stricken with pain ; ‘ you will not listen to me—you will not listen. Ah, Robert, remember our child will become a woman by-and-by. Who knows but she may demand from me an account of the past ; and what would I say—what would

you say ? And Jean Gorbai ! ah, those letters, those letters !’

Her voice became suddenly sharp, and even shrill, whilst some inspiration of alarm gave her unexpected strength, and with an affrighted look on her haggard visage, she partly raised herself on her elbow. Mr. Cargill hastened to support her.

‘ Will he get them from her ?’ she cried ; and here Mr. Cargill had an instinctive feeling that the pronoun did not refer to him ; ‘ will he *force* them from her ? I told them the truth ; they turned on me and would not believe ; they pretended that I was trying to deceive them again for my child’s sake. Yes, my own child turned upon me, scorned me, and cursed me—ay, cursed. Ah, hush ! do not let anybody know about that—my child cursed me. Oh, Robert, forgive—forgive me ! I had not the courage to resist your command, nor the strength to obey it, and—and——’

As she faltered confusedly over the last

word, the door opened quietly, whilst the clock was striking twelve, and Mr. Hewitt appeared.

Mrs. Burnett's eyes rested on him, and for the first time intelligence shone in them. A cold shiver affected her whole body. The past had sunk from her, and she was conscious of the present. Raising herself with a strength that amazed all who saw, she extended a shuddering arm towards the lawyer, and with a gasp as if her lungs cracked in the effort, she moaned :

‘ Assassin !’

That was all. Her whole strength had been concentrated in the effort she had made, and instantly she sank back.

There was a brief interval of silent amaze at the strange salutation Mr. Hewitt had received. That gentleman himself had only raised his eyebrows and looked at Sarah ; then he gravely advanced and drew her apart, as if to proffer his sympathy in that moment of trial.

Mr. Cargill turned slowly to Mrs. Burnett, and he looked on a corpse.

He sat down on the chair which had been placed for him previously—sat down, holding the dead woman's hand, his eyes fixed upon her, and he became almost as cold and rigid as the one on whom the shadow had fallen.

The majesty of death hushed all tongues, and Mr. Hewitt's presence even was forgotten.

The nurse was the first to move, and she gently drew Kate away from the bed, and into the other room. The doctor, as if reminded of his duty, hastened to attend to Mr. Cargill, and in some alarm discovered that he was in a swoon.

'Fetch some water!' cried the doctor, whilst with rapid fingers he unfastened the cravat and shirt-collar, and tore open the vest of his new patient.

The doctor, with Mr. Hewitt's assistance, carried the unconscious millionaire out of

the room. Then, by the prompt administration of the proper restoratives, Mr. Cargill's senses were restored.

As soon as the doctor had brought him to that state, he turned his attention to Kate, who was at present folded in Sarah's arms, silent and tearless, whilst Sarah tried, in the midst of her own grief, to whisper words of comfort and hope. On this occasion, as much as any other, Sarah displayed that quiet firmness of character for which she was remarkable, and which rendered her invaluable as a nurse. Happen what might, Sarah never lost her presence of mind.

When Mr. Cargill opened his eyes they met those of Mr. Hewitt, who was bending over him.

'Are you better, sir?' asked the lawyer.

'Better,' he repeated, looking about him as if unable to understand the circumstances of his present position; and then with darkening face he remembered all. 'Yes, thank

you,' he said feebly, 'I am better. Did you come here to see me, Mr. Hewitt?'

'No, sir; I was transacting some business for Mrs. Burnett—important business, which compelled me to intrude upon Miss Sarah, even at such a time as this.'

Sarah herself advanced and whispered in her father's ear :

'He came for the money, sir.'

'I understand—you will explain about that by-and-by, Sarah. Have you any fresh tidings for us in regard to your client—my nephew?'

'I am sorry to say no, sir.'

'Ah, well! ah, well! do what you can; spare no labour that money can pay to save him.'

'Depend upon it, sir, I will do all that can be done.'

'Thank you.'

Mr. Cargill rose, assisted by Mr. Hewitt and Sarah. Releasing himself from them,

as if ashamed of his own weakness, he turned to her.

‘You will see to everything that is needed here, Sarah, and to-morrow I will come to you again, or I will send for you to come to Mavisbank. Kate.’

He tottered to her side and offered his arm. It was evident what a mighty effort of the man’s will was required to sustain him on his feet, with all the assistance of his staff.

A slight bend of his head to the doctor, and leading Kate he passed out. Mr. Hewitt hurried on before to open the door for them, and to assist them into the carriage.

‘Mr. Lyon’s, Woodlands Road,’ Mr. Cargill said to the footman ; and the latter repeated the direction to the coachman as the carriage drove off.

‘Lyon’s!’ muttered Hewitt, raising his eyebrows, as he stood fingering his watch-guard, and observing the receding car-

riage. 'Perhaps he has discovered some evidence that may be of service? No; it is merely the order to see the prisoner they want.'

And with a reflective manner he re-entered the house.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE CHASE.

BAFFLED at every hand apparently, all help refused him by Mr. Lyon, and even his devoted admirer, Inspector Speirs, disposed to sneer at the sudden change of his tactics, John Hadden was as near the zero of despair as it was possible for one of his sanguine temperament to be.

Thereupon he partook of a sumptuous repast in the nearest hotel, which happened to be in Buchanan Street. Willie Thorne, somewhat awkward in his new garments, and not quite reconciled to a clean face and kempt hair, was seated at the table opposite his chief, and in silent delight devoured the good things which were placed before him.

He was even content to wash his face once a day for such fare as this.

As for Hadden, he ate placidly, and with the enjoyment of a philosopher, although a somewhat nervous one. And as he ate he felt his courage revive.

‘Ah, Willie!’ he exclaimed, ‘folks haven’t quite understood yet how much a satisfied stomach has to do with heroism.’

Willie nodded, although he did not see the least connection between the dinner and the remark. However, he thought it was safe to nod and look knowing, which permitted him to proceed with the dinner without offence to his master.

Hadden had been out with his *protégé* late the previous night, and he had been out with him again since an early hour that morning, hunting for the driver of the cab without success. But now he was already planning the next route they should take.

He would not be beaten. Obstacles should only quicken him to renewed exer-

tion. He had placed the life of an innocent man in jeopardy, and he would save him yet. He had six days left still, and what might not be accomplished in six days by a man of energy ?

He summed up the whole position. In what respect had he failed ? Were the deductions from his observations in the house at Port-Dundas wrong ? No. Was his theory false ? No. Where had he failed, then ?

‘Tavendale is surrounded by the most unlucky circumstances,’ he muttered, clasping his hands round his knee and rocking his body to and fro ; ‘but he is *not* the man. Let me see, now, who are the parties interested in Jean Gorbals’s death. First, Mrs. Burnett, to hide her shame from Sarah and the world, and to ensure her daughter in the position she had no business to occupy. Well, Mrs. Burnett didn’t do it. Who next ? Cargill himself—to save himself from the risk of such an exposure as has

just taken place. But he did not do the work ; true, he might have hired some one ; and supposing he could have found an elegant young man with an umbrella, and who smoked Havana cigars with an amber mouthpiece, possessing all the rare qualities of coolness, cunning, and foresight, which this criminal certainly possesses—supposing he could have found such a man for his purpose, would he not have relieved himself of one accomplice to place himself in the power of a more dangerous one ?’

Hadden paused an instant to review that proposition, and then—

‘ Bah ! Cargill is a man of the world, and would never be guilty of such folly. Then comes Tavendale, the husband of Catherine—ah, that’s the worst of it ! he learns that she is not the great heiress he bargained for ; that she is about to be exposed to the world as an impostor, a usurper—to be dragged down from the high position of a millionaire’s heiress to that of—well, to

say the least, the daughter of an unfortunate woman. Umph ! yes, I can't shut my eyes to it ; he had certainly strong motives for the crime.'

Hadden here changed his hands from one knee to the other, and proceeded, whilst Willie Thorne, satiated and half-stupefied with over-eating, sat staring at his master, and occasionally at the table, with a disposition to pocket the remains of the ample dinner.

'Try back. Jean Gorbai, who was so ready to serve Cargill, would be just as ready to lend her services to anybody else for anything else by which she could make a few pounds without much labour. Well, then, why should it not have been on account of some other affair altogether that she was—removed ? As likely as not ; and, if Heaven pleases, I shall be glad if Mactier comes back and blows to the wind my fine explanation of the cause of the crime. Yes, I will submit to be laughed at, will submit

to be mocked at as an old fool, and I will say my presumption has been lightly punished if they turn me out of the force, if at the same time they will only rescue Alick Tavendale from the hangman's grip.'

He suddenly dropped his foot to the ground, and drawing out his big pocket-handkerchief, blew his nose with such a sonorous ring that Willie started from the doze into which he had been falling, and uttered an astonished 'Eh?'

'Those papers,' muttered Hadden, not heeding his *protégé*: 'if it had been another affair, why should those papers have been burnt? A person interested in another affair would have no desire to burn them. It won't do; there's nothing for it but to get to the bottom; there's something in it I don't and can't see. But I will see it before I've done.'

He jumped to his feet, summoned the waiter, and settled the bill.

'Come, lad!'

Willie reluctantly got out of the easy-chair in which he had settled himself, and followed his patron. They re-visited several of the cab-stands which they had inspected on the previous night. They made a tour through innumerable public-houses, and particularly all those in the neighbourhood of the cab-stands. Still without success.

At length, as they approached the rank which had been the last they had visited the night before, when they had found more than half the cabs knocked off for the night, or out with fares, Willie seized his master's arm.

‘That’s him!’ he said briefly.

He pointed to a cabman in a jerry hat, who was just crossing from the rank to the Tron Arms tavern, at the door of which were grouped a number of ‘cabbies,’ discussing the latest sporting news, badness of fares, and the general ill-treatment their class received at the hands of the public,

which, with their misrepresentation by the press, was a growing and unendurable evil.

Hadden darted forward, and just as the man Willie had pointed out had pushed open the door of the bar, and was about to enter, he tapped him on the shoulder.

‘Hallo!’ cried the cabman, looking round, and then mistaking his accoster’s object—
‘I’ll be with you in a minute, sir; just come off a long journey, and I am cursed thirsty.’

He was about to dive into the bar after that explanation, when Hadden stayed him by taking a firm grip of his arm.

‘What’s the matter?’ growled the man, inclined to become ill-humoured by this interference with the acts of a free-drinking Briton.

‘Well, if you are so very thirsty as to lose your temper over it,’ said Hadden good-humouredly, ‘come on and I’ll stand treat.’

‘Will you though, old boy?’ cried the man, his vexation vanishing. ‘Come on, then; you’re the right sort!’

They entered; a proper supply of whisky was obtained and paid for by Hadden. The cabman drank to his liberal customer’s health, and then wiped his mouth with the back of his hand, and with the air of one refreshed.

‘Where is’t you want to go to, sir?’ he said, after exchanging a few words of banter with a smart barmaid.

‘You’ll have to tell me that.’

‘Me? maybe you’ll tell us how that happens?’

‘You took up a friend of mine near the Royal George yesterday afternoon, about five o’clock.’

‘Did I?’—and the man appeared to reflect by setting his head to one side, and observing his companion from the corners of his eyes.

‘Yes; I’ve lost the address he gave me,

and I want you to drive me to the place you set him down at.'

'Eh, do ye?'

'Just so, and there's a half-sov. when you land me.'

'Ow, a half sov.,' repeated the man slowly, and now eyeing the coin; 'what might he be like?'

Hadden quietly returned the coin to his pocket, and very delicately passed his finger over his nose.

'You're a smart chap—what's your name?'

'Joe Torry, and I'm no ashamed o' it.'

'Glad to hear it. Now, then, you remember passing the Royal George yesterday?'

'Surely,' was the answer, with a degree of shyness, for the man guessed that there was more in this than a stranger trying to find a lost address.

'And you took up a gentleman about fifty yards on this side of the George?'

'I did.'

‘What was he like?’

‘Tallish chap rather, wi’ an umbrella.’

‘That’s the man. Come on, lad ; take us to the place, and I’ll make it a whole sov.’

Joe Torry was not proof against such a temptation as that, so he hastily finished his whisky and hurried off to his horse. The nose-bag was removed in an instant. Joe mounted to his seat, and drove over to the kerb where Hadden and Willie were waiting for him.

They took their places, Joe cracked his whip, and away they went at full speed, the detective’s pulse throbbing with impatience. He had picked up the clue again, and it should go hard but he would follow it to the issue without pause or new blunder. On rolled the cab, and Hadden’s spirits rose at every pace the horse made, for it was bringing him nearer, nearer to the guilty one—nearer, nearer to the rescue of the innocent. There could be no missing of

the way this time ; the course was clear, and he was driving straight to his object.

The cab stopped in front of a quiet-looking house, the blinds and all the windows of which were carefully drawn, as if somebody lay dead or dying within.

Joe had sprung from his box as Hadden stepped out.

‘This is the house, sir, the gent went into.’

Hadden looked up : it was Hill Street, and the house the man pointed to was Mrs. Burnett’s.

He stared at the house, then he stared at the man, and stared at the house again.

‘You’ve made a mistake, my man,’ he began feebly, conscious that his head was beginning to reel with the bewilderment and confusion of his thoughts ; ‘that can’t be the house.’

Joe looked at him with a scowl, for he suspected at once that this was a ruse to save the promised reward.

‘Maybe it canna,’ he responded surlily ;

‘but this is where the chap stopped me, and that’s the door he went in at. I saw him go as I was driving off, and I saw the lass that let him in; and when a chap says a thing, he ought to stick to it.’

Hadden did not take the hint conveyed in these last words. He had produced his handkerchief and was busy wiping the cold perspiration from his face, staring hard at the house-door.

‘Willie,’ he said, turning to his *protégé*, who had not got out of the cab yet, and showed no desire to do so, ‘you can stay where you are. Joe Torry, you’ll wait.’

‘Surely, if you say it.’

Hadden advanced to the door and knocked. The girl Susan, after the lapse of a few minutes, appeared, with very red eyes, as if she had been crying a good deal.

‘Eh, what’s the matter, my lass?’ he queried.

‘Oh, Mr. Hadden, the mistress—the mistress is gone!’

‘Gone!’ echoed Hadden, his hair seeming to rise on end with the alarming reflection that he was to encounter some new and disagreeable surprise at every step.

‘When did it happen?’

‘This forenoon, sir. Will you come in, sir?’

‘No, thank you, I won’t go in just now; you can say I was here, and that I’ll come round in the morning. By the way, was there a gentleman here yesterday evening?’

‘Yes, sir, the doctor.’

‘Anybody else?’

‘No, sir—oh yes, Mr. Hewitt was here.’

‘About what time?’

‘A little after five, sir; he came first, and then, as Sarah wasn’t at home, he went away, and came back later in the evening.’

‘Did he come in a cab?’

‘The first time? Yes, a hansom, same as that there.’

‘Thank you. Say that I’ll be here to-morrow.’

And Hadden slowly re-entered the cab, but his hands were working feverishly with his staff.

‘You haven’t said where to, sir,’ said Joe, breaking in upon his bewildered reflections.

‘George Street,’ he answered, with a start—‘George Street: I don’t know the number, but I’ll stop you when you come to the place.’

‘All right.’

‘All wrong,’ muttered Hadden, as the cab moved away; ‘but we may as well run to the end of the tack. It’s another miss, but at any rate I can have a talk with him over the affair.’

With that reflection, he leaned back and tried to compose himself till he reached the end of the journey.

CHAPTER XXIX.

JOHN HADDEN IN A MAZE.

As the hansom whirled along the streets, Hadden experienced a sensation of giddiness in the head and uneasiness in the stomach, which made him wish sincerely enough that he had never risked his peace of mind in becoming a detective. What were all the petty triumphs he could make, compared with the misery of the thought that he brought an innocent man to the scaffold?

At present his position was a most unhappy one. First, he was convinced of Alick Tavendale's innocence, yet he had supplied the chief proof which was to condemn him. Again, he had tracked a man upon whom

he had fixed suspicion, and lo! this man proved to be Tavendale's agent, and the betrothed husband of the girl who was precious in Hadden's eyes as a daughter—Sarah. Certainly, Mr. Hewitt could have nothing to do with this wretched affair.

He signalled to the driver when they were opposite the lawyer's office, and as soon as the cab had drawn up to the pavement he jumped out.

He bade the cabman wait, and he took Willie with him upstairs to the office. Hewitt's very sharp boy with the very short legs was, as usual, perched on the stool with the long legs, and dismounted with a spring when Hadden entered.

'Mr. Hewitt's engaged, sir—par-tic-u-lar.'

'Very well; I'll wait.'

And he waited accordingly for half an hour, fidgeting about the place in a restless fashion, to the great amusement of the sharp boy.

Willie planted his back against the wall,

and, with his hands behind him, stood there alternately on each foot. His quick eyes followed the movements of his patron curiously, and occasionally glanced at the office-boy, as if wondering what he could find to do on the top of the high stool.

‘Look here, my man; you’d better tell Mr. Hewitt that I’m waiting,’ said Hadden, at length.

‘Yes, sir.’

But at that moment the voices, which hitherto had been heard only in a dull drone, out of which no words could be distinguished, rose to a louder key.

‘You must do as I say, or go to the devil!’ exclaimed Mr. Hewitt’s voice angrily, and both the anger and the words disturbed Hadden; for it was not customary with Mr. Hewitt to display anger with anyone, least of all to a client, and the advice which he had just given was scarcely of a purely legal character.

‘You know it is not me that presses

you,' answered a sharp voice, with a slightly nasal twang. I wouldn't do it myself, nohow. But the old chap says he has waited a good while now; two thousand's only half, and he wants to know where's his security for the other half?'

'I'm going to be married, and he shall have it the day after—curse him!'

'Amen! I'll see how he takes it.'

The door of the inner room opened, and a slim short man came out. He was stylishly dressed, with white hat, blue coat, velvetten vest, and trousers fitting tight about the knees; in his blue-spotted scarf was a large pin, the head of which represented a horse at full gallop, and gave the key-note to his character—his style was of the turf, and manner and dress were distinctly 'horsey.'

He was the ostler of the Royal George.

Hadden's eyes opened, and he nodded to the man, whom he had known as mixed up in various turf speculations of anything but

a satisfactory nature. The fellow was indeed pretty well known to the force as Nicol Ogg, *alias* Dandy Nick, who, although he had never been entrapped in any unfair dealing, was suspected to have a close intimacy with those who considered everything fair on the turf.

Ogg nodded familiarly and passed on; but Hewitt, who came out immediately after him, looked for an instant confused on observing Hadden. Then, quickly recovering, he said, in a tone of friendly warning :

‘ You must arrange your affairs as I have explained, or else I can do nothing for you, and it will be useless coming to me.’

‘ All right,’ said Nicol Ogg; and in a knowing way he winked and nodded.

Although Hadden’s back was turned and he could not observe this little by-play, Willie did.

When the door closed upon Ogg, Mr. Hewitt turned to Hadden and shook him by the hand, apologizing at the same time.

‘That is one of my most troublesome customers,’ he said, leading the way to his private room. ‘I need not mind telling you that his transactions are none of the cleanest. He makes a great deal of money, and he has been good enough to select me as his agent. I consented, after some hesitation and consideration, and the result has been that I have no end of bother with him.’

‘Yes, he’s a queer chap.’

‘So queer that I fairly lost my temper with him just now; and I have told him that unless he places his business on a better footing I will have nothing to do with him or his affairs in the future.’

‘Quite right.’

‘Have you been waiting long?’

‘No; only a few minutes.’

‘The boy ought to have told me you were here. You would have relieved me of my client sooner,’ and Mr. Hewitt laughed drily. ‘But now that he is gone and you are here, is there anything I can do for you?’

Do you come upon poor Mrs. Burnett's business ?'

'No, no ; not exactly. You see this lad here—well, I've taken an interest in him, and I've got a fancy to put him in a lawyer's office. I thought you could help me in that. Come here, Willie, and let Mr. Hewitt have a look at you.'

Willie had halted near the door, and beside a small hat-stand, in which were a Malacca cane, silver-mounted, a plain black-thorn, and a slim silk umbrella. This latter object he was quietly examining when he was told to advance to the solicitor. He obeyed instantly.

'A sharp-looking lad,' said Mr. Hewitt patronizingly, 'and I dare say he'll make his way. So you would like to be a lawyer, my lad ?'

'I dinna ken,' said Willie honestly, thinking probably of the execrations he had always heard vented on lawyers amongst his acquaintances.

‘He’ll have to go to school for a few months first,’ interposed Hadden hastily ; ‘only I should like your advice on the subject, whether you think it would be worth while setting a lad like him to learn lawyers’ business.

‘Why not ? The work is hard, of course ; but to a lad who is steady and persevering there’s as good an opening for him in our profession as in any other. In fact, it is not the business or profession a man chooses that enables him to get on ; it is his own industry and adaptability to the course he has chosen ;’ and Mr. Hewitt looked as if he would say, ‘Regard me, and see what industry can do.’

‘Thanks, Mr. Hewitt ; I agree with you, and I suppose I may count on your helping me to get him a place when he’s ready.’

‘I shall be happy to do anything for you, Mr. Hadden.’

‘Thank you again ; that’s just what I expected from your good-nature.’

‘ Oh, it is nothing—nothing. Very happy, I’m sure, to be of service to you.’

‘ That’s kind. I was wondering if I could get him into your old office, Martin and Holroyd’s. By the way, were you at Mr. Holroyd’s on Monday evening last week?’

‘ Monday evening last week,’ repeated Mr. Hewitt reflectively—‘ Monday evening—oh dear, no; I recollect now, I was at the theatre with two friends of mine—Mackie and Duncan Milne.’

‘ Of Cargill and Company’s?’

‘ The same.’

‘ Ah, I think I have seen them; I only asked if you were at Holroyd’s because a friend of mine was there, and I wanted to know if you had met him. However, about the lad; if you think you could get him into Martin and Holroyd’s office——’

‘ I think I can almost promise you a place for him there.’

‘ I shall be under a great obligation. I

won't take up your valuable time any longer. Good-afternoon, and thank you again. Come, Willie.'

Mr. Hewitt made a pretence of regretting that he was hurrying away so soon, but in the same breath declared that he was so busy he did not know how he should acquit himself of his multifarious engagements. Hadden was pleased to learn that he was so busy, and would not on any account waste another moment of his time. So whilst talking he stretched out his hand to lift his blackthorn staff from the stand, but accidentally took the umbrella instead. He did not appear to observe his mistake, and Mr. Hewitt certainly did not observe it, or he would have referred to it.

Before they had reached the foot of the staircase Hadden gripped his *protégé* by the arm.

'Now, Willie, lad, think well before you speak—was that the man you saw going into Higgin's Close?'

‘That was the chap, I’m certain sure, though he hadn’t got the same clothes on ; and that was the umbrella he hit me wi’ that you’ve got in your han’.’

Hadden looked at the umbrella, and expressed no surprise at the mistake he had made ; but a sharp twinge of alarm passed over his face as he looked at the ferrule. It was a patent ferrule, exactly the same as that of the umbrella he had found in Taven-dale’s lodgings.

He advanced quickly to Joe Torry, who, observing him approach, began to unfasten the nose-bag from his horse’s head.

‘Did you see a little man with a white hat and a blue coat come out ten minutes ago ?’

‘Do you mean Dandy Nick ? Ay, I saw him and spoke to him. He’s just gone round the corner yonder.’

‘After him, quick ! I must speak to him.’

Hadden and Willie jumped into the cab ;

Joe mounted to his perch and drove off in pursuit of the sporting gentleman. The latter had turned into Queen Street, and they overtook him at the corner of Ingram Street.

He was not a little surprised, and even startled, when the cab pulled up short beside him. Joe hailed him, and Hadden sprang out, seizing him by the arm.

‘What’s up?’ he asked, as if he were half inclined to run for it.

‘Nothing—nothing particular, that is—only I want to speak to you,’ panted Hadden; and then, putting his arm through Nicol’s, he directed the cabman to follow slowly, and walked on with his companion, who did not seem to be delighted by this condescension, for his mind was busy searching for any event which might have brought him within the reach of the law.

‘I won’t keep you many minutes, Ogg,’ said Hadden confidentially; ‘I only want

to know how much he's owing you, and what it's for.'

'Who's he?' queried Ogg slyly.

'Hewitt, of course.'

'Oh, him—he's not——'

'Stop! he's paid you two thousand; how much more is it? You see I know something of the affair; and now I'll tell you why I want to know the rest. He is likely to need help. I'm going to help him, but first I must understand the whole business. Go on; how much more is it?'

Ogg hesitated, furtively eyed his companion, and then, as if determined to relieve himself of all suspicion, spoke:

'It's two thousand more.'

'That's four thousand altogether—a good round sum. How did he get so deep in your books?'

'It's not my book at all.'

'Stop! I know one or two things about you, Ogg; shall I tell you what they are?'

Here goes. First, you play at ostler at the Royal George. In that position you are able to lay your hands easily on any greenhorn who may have a few hundreds to enter on a good tip for the next race. You provide the good tip, and pocket the few hundreds on the sly; making believe all the while that you never touch a farthing of it, and shoving your old father forward as the scapegoat. In his name you win money and lend money, and screw money out of the unlucky wretches who drop into your spider's web. Now you see that there's no use keeping up the sham with me, for I know all about it. How did it happen ?'

'Easy enough,' returned Ogg sullenly, 'and fairly enough. He's been playing the fine gent for the past year; he dropped a lump on the last Derby and the last Goodwood—not through me. If he'd minded what I said to him he wouldn't have lost a rap—but he wouldn't mind me, and he lost.

He had to pay, and he borrowed from—my friend.'

'Just so. Go on!'

'Well, he's been keeping things afloat with bills, but he hasn't been clearing any of them off; and as I heard he was getting deeper in the books of everybody he could borrow from, I advised my friend to look sharp after hisself. He's been doing that, and so he's managed to get the draft for two thousand.'

'A draft—are you sure it's genuine?'

'Ogg was startled by the suggestion, and clapped his hands on his breast as if he had been struck. A pocket inside his velveteen vest contained various valuable scraps of paper.

'He wouldn't try anything of that sort,' growled Ogg, with blanched face and blue lips.

'I don't suppose he would; but you had better let me have a look at the paper.'

'Come in here, then.'

All thought of hiding Hewitt's secret from Hadden had vanished from Ogg's mind when he heard that so much was already known to him ; but if it had not it would have disappeared now, at the suggestion of a trick in the payment of his money.

They entered a tavern, obtained a private room, and Ogg immediately produced from his secret pocket the order. Hadden examined it, and groaned inwardly when he saw it was signed by Mr. Cargill and genuine—for the letters Sarah had shown him had made him acquainted with the millionaire's writing. There was only one channel through which Hewitt could have obtained this ; and Hadden felt his head reel again with the confused doubts and suspicions suggested to him by the various discoveries he had made that day.

‘ Is it all right ? ’ asked Ogg anxiously.

‘ All right.’

Ogg snatched it back, and replaced it in his pocket.

‘That’s satisfactory anyhow,’ he said, with a breath of relief, ‘and I expect there’ll be more in the nest this egg came from. He says he’s going to be married, and he’ll square up the day after. Is that true?’

‘I dare say it is, but I wouldn’t say anything about it, if I were you. Keep it to yourself, and make as much as you can out of it.’

‘I take you; let the others look out for themselves.’

‘Do you think he owes much besides what he is still indebted to you?’

‘Can’t say, and don’t care. Should think he’s in a pretty desperate pass, or he wouldn’t be so eager to make me keep my mouth shut—that is, I mean, to make me make my friend keep his mouth——’

‘I know—I know about that. Did he ask you to keep these transactions quiet?’

‘Rather; he said it would ruin him if they were known, and that wouldn’t suit me, nohow.’

‘I understand, and I too would advise you to keep quiet about it. Don’t tell him that you have spoken to me even—at least until I see you again; and that will be in a day or two.’

‘A bargain’s a bargain, and you’ll keep mum about me—eh?’

‘If I can—yes.’

They parted good friends. Hadden had re-entered the cab, and drove next to the office of Messrs. Cargill and Co., in St. Vincent Street. The clerks had all gone, and the porter was locking up the place.

From the porter Hadden, with the help of half-a-crown, obtained the addresses of Mackie and Milne. To the lodgings of the latter, in Portland Street, he proceeded first.

Milne was at his tea, and Hadden was admitted to the parlour, where he was presently joined by the gentleman he had come to see. Hadden apologized for intruding, and stated that a matter of importance, which he could not at present explain

required him to ask Mr. Milne several questions.

Milne was puzzled, but, being a frank easy gentleman, he bade his visitor go on, and he would answer him to the best of his ability.

‘Were you at the theatre on Monday evening last week?’

Yes; he had been at the theatre on that evening with Frank Mackie and Laurence Hewitt, the lawyer. They had at first proposed to get Alick Tavendale to accompany them, but on calling at his lodgings he refused. They had started for the theatre. On the way they had met Hewitt. They had adjourned to a tavern and sat drinking together for a good while, and then Hewitt proposed that they should all go to the theatre together. They agreed.

‘Did you remain during the whole performance?’

‘We did not wait for the last farce.’

‘Was Hewitt with you all the time?’

‘Yes’—hesitating and trying to remember. ‘By Jove, I got so muzzy with drinking beer and wine that I can’t exactly remember. I have a dim sort of an idea, though, that he went out for a while and left us there. Yes, he did. I remember now. Frank wanted to go for some more beer, and asked where Hewitt was; and as he hadn’t returned, we went into the refreshment saloon without him.’

‘What time might it be when he left you?’

‘I’m hanged if I can remember that. I think it was somewhere about the end of the first or second act, and he did not come back till the end of the play. Frank will perhaps remember better than I do, I was so confoundedly muddled.’

‘Thank you; I will call on Mr. Mackie. In a day or two I shall be able to explain why I have given you this trouble.’

And Hadden retired, his face alternately dark with frowns and lit with excitement.

He called at Mackie's, saw him, and received much the same statement as that he had obtained from Milne—with the difference that Mackie was almost positive Hewitt went out at the end of the first act and did not return till the play was over, when he told them that he had come during their absence at the refreshment saloon, and had gone out again to look for them.

'There's the *alibi* if it were needed,' groaned Hadden, as he was driven away.

CHAPTER XXX.

IMPORTANT EVIDENCE.

WHEN Mr. Cargill's carriage stopped at the Sheriff's house in Woodland's Road, Kate had arranged with her father that he should permit her to see Mr. Lyon alone in the first place. So he remained in the carriage, lying back on the seat, and completely hidden from casual observation, whilst she entered the house.

She was immediately conducted to the library, where she found Mr. Lyon standing on the hearth, looking with an anxious expression towards the door.

‘Miss Cargill,’ he said, in a low voice that did not seem to be quite steady, as he bent his head.

Never in her happiest days had she appeared to him more beautiful than now, with the shadow of her great sorrow on her face. Her eyes, bright with the traces of recent tears, shone with generous resolution and confidence. He felt that, gentle, timid as her nature was, it had the strength to accomplish a great duty, out of that simple faith in truth which is the basis of the noblest heroism.

With a quiet dignity she advanced to him, extending her hand, which he pressed respectfully.

‘We are still friends,’ she said, with a sad smile.

‘Always friends,’ he replied, handing her a chair.

She seated herself, Mr. Lyon remained standing.

You know why I have come?—to ask you to prove yourself my friend, and help me. I have come to you because I know you are my friend, to confess to you that

which I concealed at our last meeting—when—you remember——’

‘Yes, I remember all,’ he said huskily.

She had been too much agitated herself at first to observe his agitation; but she observed now how his voice trembled, and his eyes drooped before hers. She understood how her words must pain him; but they must be spoken.

‘You understand, Mr. Lyon, that I would not willingly give you pain; and being confident of that, I have come to implore you to save Alick Tavendale. I told you that I was bound to him by ties which could not be broken. I tell you now that he is my husband, and you my friend, having the power, will help me to save him from his present danger.’

Mr. Lyon’s head was bent low, so that she could not see his face; but she knew by his rapid breathing that he was suffering.

‘Alas, Mistress——’ he could not pronounce the wedded name at that moment—

‘Miss Cargill, how can I help you if he is not innocent?’

She slightly rose from her seat, protesting against the doubt with a gesture of her hand.

‘How can I help you,’ he went on, ‘if it is shown that he is guilty?’

‘Ah, sir, you do not think that?’ she interrupted.

‘I fear to answer you,’ he said sadly, ‘that the proofs are so strong against him as to be morally conclusive of his guilt.’

She regarded him in a species of stupor, for his words seemed to have crushed down the hope with which she had come to seek his aid.

‘It is hard that I should be the one whose tongue must bid you gather up your strength to encounter the worst,’ he went on agitatedly; ‘but it is better, perhaps, that you should hear it from a friend than from others. His conviction is certain.’

He had expected some wild outcry of despair, expected to see her overwhelmed

with tears, or that she would faint. But he was mistaken. She rose with a quiet dignity and indignation in her eyes.

‘You have condemned him already,’ she cried, ‘and he is innocent. Alick Taven-
dale is incapable of this crime, and those who say he is guilty lie. It is false, I say; and he were standing there himself, saying “I am guilty,” I would repeat, “It is false—it is false!”’

‘He has not yet confessed,’ continued Lyon, deeply pained by the stern task forced upon him, ‘but he will confess by-and-by; and even if he do not, the proofs are more than sufficient to condemn him. Listen to me, Miss Cargill, for mine is the voice of a friend. Be silent, and try to reconcile yourself to the thought of what must come in a few days.’

‘That is to say, you would have me desert my husband in the hour of his sorest need. Yours is the voice of the world, Mr. Lyon—the cold callous world; but you

forget I am his wife, and you forget her duty. When the last friend flies at the shadow of misfortune—when the last relative shrinks back from the ruin, the wife remains to console and sustain.'

He could not help admiring her devotion, and pitying its object, whilst he regretted that the object had not been more worthy of it.

'I may be timid,' she went on excitedly, 'but I am not a coward; and if it were needed, I, his wife, would stand beside him on the scaffold, and declare his innocence, in despite of justice, and law, and the world. You do not know him as I do, or you would not doubt him. From childhood we have known each other's least and greatest thought, and I know that his heart is brave and noble.'

Mr. Lyon passed his hand nervously through his hair. His was a generous honest nature, but he would have been more than human had he not felt the fiery pang of jealousy shoot through him at the revela-

tion of such love as this, which he had once hoped to win for himself, given to another.

‘All this may be true,’ he said, controlling himself, ‘but justice demands the proof; and although I, knowing you, and respecting you, can credit all you say, your declaration is valueless in the eyes of law.’

‘Are you sure, Mr. Lyon, that you do not *wish* to find Alick Tavendale guilty? Are you sure that you are an impartial judge of his innocence or guilt? Are you sure that there does not linger in your mind the memory that this man came between you and a hope you once cherished?’

He was startled by the quiet solemnity of her manner; and then he felt indignant at her suspicion, for he had searched his mind through, and found that for her sake he would rather have seen Tavendale free than have seen him condemned for any gain it might bring to himself.

‘Miss Cargill,’ he said sternly, ‘if you knew what proofs are in my hands you

would not wrong me by so grievous a suspicion.'

'What proofs are there so conclusive?'

'The very first that occurs is alone conclusive. The murder was committed between eight and nine o'clock on Monday evening last week. Alick Tavendale left his lodgings about six o'clock on that evening, and did not return till midnight. When he returned he was agitated, and his clothes were soiled and wet. He refuses to take the very simplest means to prove his innocence—by showing how and where he spent that evening.'

Katie clasped her hands together, with a half-stifled cry of terror.

'And—and if it could be shown where he was from seven or from six o'clock that evening till twelve o'clock, would that save him?'

'Assuredly.'

'Then he is saved—he was with me!'

'With you!' ejaculated Mr. Lyon, as-

tounded by this simple explanation of the most difficult point in the case.

‘Yes, with me, at Mavisbank.’

‘Then the servants, your maid, and all saw him there, and can attest——’

‘No, no,’ she interrupted hastily. ‘You know that my father had told him to restrict the number of his visits to our house. After I had learned the miserable story of my birth, I wrote to him to come to me. He came, and when he knew all, to screen me from the shame that was about to fall upon us in the declaration that Sarah Cargill was the real heiress of my father, he insisted that we should be married at once. On the Saturday the marriage took place. On the Monday he wrote to me, desiring me to appoint an hour when he could see me privately that evening, for, as he had been at the house several times during my father’s absence, he did not wish the servants to see him, lest they should talk.’

‘You made the appointment?’

‘Yes, for seven o’clock that evening. He was to come to the door at the foot of the garden, and I was to admit him. I obtained the key of the door, but it had not been used for some time, and when I tried to turn it in the lock I could not. Alick came whilst I was trying to unlock the door. I threw the key over the wall to him. He tried it, and also failed. Then he climbed over the wall, the top of which, as you know, is covered with broken bottles. The glass tore his gloves and the knee of his trousers. We remained together until I heard twelve o’clock strike, and then I bade him go. We got a small ladder out of the tool-house, and with its help he went over the wall again. Then I threw the ladder down beside the shrubbery.’

‘But it began to rain about nine o’clock.’

‘Yes, and he put up his umbrella till we got into the summer-house. Then he stuck the point of the umbrella in the earth, at

the door of the summer-house, and called it our guard.'

'May I ask why he desired to see you on that evening?' The suspicion had flashed upon him that she might be trying to save her husband at the expense of truth.

'He wished me to go away with him at once, and then he was to write to my father and tell him that we were married. I refused.'

She answered frankly; he could not doubt the truth.

'Your own assertion of this will not be sufficient. Have you no proofs? Did none of the servants see him?'

'I do not know. Examine them. Here is his letter asking the interview, and you can find mine granting it.'

'No; it is burnt.'

He remembered the note Tavendale was said to have burnt. He examined the one Kate handed to him: it bore no date.

'This is not enough.'

‘ There is his messenger.’

‘ Ah, yes, we will find him ;’ and Mr. Lyon hastily wrote for Inspector Speirs to come to him at once. ‘ Now,’ he said, as he touched the bell, ‘ I can bid you hope ; for if we can find proof that he was at Mavisbank on Monday evening, he is safe.’

She gave him her hand, and thanked him earnestly. Then as the servant entered she took her leave, happier than when she arrived, for she had obtained hope.

‘ Captain Mactier is here, sir, and desires to see you at once.’

‘ Show him in, and send this note away instantly.’

The servant retired, and Mr. Lyon seated himself by the table. He had scarcely done so, when the door opened, and Mactier entered, dragging in by the button of his pea-jacket a stout-set man, whose dress was that of a sailor. He had a round, ruddy, close-shaven face, with honest blue eyes, and earrings in his ears. He bowed

awkwardly to Mr. Lyon as Mactier led him in.

‘Here’s my man at last, sir,’ said the chief constable, with an air of triumph.

CHAPTER XXXI.

MORE IMPORTANT EVIDENCE.

IF the chief constable's introduction had not been sufficiently explicit of itself, the big earrings his companion wore would have at once proclaimed him the man who had been standing at the door of Jean Gorbal's house on the day of her murder, and who had sent Willie Thorne to Bob Little with the message, 'If he's ready, I am.'

But before the captain had spoken, Mr. Lyon had comprehended all this, for he knew with what persistent energy the chief constable could run an idea and a criminal to the ground. He was a little surprised, however, to observe that Mactier

treated his prisoner with the playful humour he might have shown to a pet bear, rather than with that stern gravity he was wont to show culprits.

‘I said eight days, sir,’ he proceeded, with a chuckle of self-satisfaction, ‘and here I am, a day before the time has expired, with the thread of this mysterious business in my hand ; I have only to uncloset my fingers so, and the thing is clear as daylight.’

‘I congratulate you, captain. The matter has become so [complicated that it will afford me much relief to discover the least ray of light,’ said Mr. Lyon quietly, and somewhat wearily ; for he had been excited by the interview with Katie, and he had been constrained to exert his will to the utmost to present a calm front to his new visitor.

‘You shall be relieved at once, sir. First let me report my course. You are aware that I determined to find the man with

the earrings'—here the person referred to made an awkward salute to the magistrate, by bending his body, sweeping his hat from his brow almost to the floor, and drawing back one of his feet, as if he were going to give somebody behind a sly kick. This process he went through at every allusion to him.

'To find him,' Mactier went on, 'it became necessary to find his friend the boatman first. I found Bob Little, and he gave me correct information regarding the movements of his acquaintance, except that he gave me a false name for him. He called him Samuel Phillips, and stated that he was about to sail from Liverpool in the *Queen Adelaide*, bound for Australia. I went to Liverpool, but the vessel had sailed. I learned from the owners that a man answering the description given had been engaged as one of the hands for the voyage; but his name was not Samuel Phillips.'

‘You pursued, I presume?’

‘I would have done so, sir, but luckily I was brought in contact with the clerk who had been on board when the vessel sailed; and he informed me that up till that moment the new hand had not appeared. My man had not sailed. I commenced again, and soon fell upon his track by searching the boarding-houses about the quay. I was enabled to follow him to London, and then to Southampton, where I laid hands on him. From the statement he made to me, it became necessary for me to accompany him to Greenock. There his statement was verified, and we came on here with all speed. From himself you will learn why we went to Greenock, and why I did not put him under lock and key at once.’

‘It wor kind on you, sir,’ muttered the man, with his awkward salute and an expression of simple admiration of the official on his face.

‘ You do not charge him, then, with the crime ? ’ said Mr. Lyon, addressing Mactier.

‘ No, sir ; but through him I will reach the criminal.’

‘ What is your name, my man ? ’ continued the magistrate, taking up his pen and looking at the sailor.

‘ Tom Gorbai, sir, seaman, A.B., at your honour’s service.’

‘ Tom Gorbai ? ’

‘ That’s it, sir.’

‘ Were you any relation to the unfortunate woman who was murdered ? You cannot be her son, for you must be as old as she was.’

‘ Nigh that, your honour ; and I ain’t her son, for sartin ; but I wor a kind o’ relation.’

‘ In what degree ? ’

The man drew his sleeve across his brow, and a wry twist of his mouth indicated that the subject was an unpleasant one.

‘ I wor her husband, sir,’ he said, with a

gulp, as if he had forced the words out by an effort of sheer desperation.

‘Her husband! Why, we understood her to have been a widow for several years.’

‘So she wor, your honour, in one way, and so she worn’t in another.’

‘You must explain this, my man; I cannot understand it.’

Gorbal gave his weather-beaten hat a twist with his hands, and glanced at Mactier, as if appealing to him to make the explanation.

‘Do it yourself, my man,’ said the captain, nodding to him encouragingly; ‘Mr. Lyon will understand it better from you.’

The man gave his hat another twist, and his honest brown visage darkened.

‘I’ll begin at the beginning, your honour, and tell you how it came about. Nigh twenty-five years ago, more or less, Jean wor as smart a wench as any in Greenock

—the smartest o' them all, I thought, though she wor a bit wild and fond o' larking about. I had a smack o' my own at that time, and wor in a fair way to do well. But I got wild about her, and nought would serve me but to take her for a wife. Mother and friends warned me against it, but the more they warned the faster I stuck to my notion ; and we got married a week or two after Jean came back from Glasgow, where she'd been working in a mill.'

' Well ?

' Well, it wor all right for a month or two, and then Jean got the wind in her sail again, and set off with some mates that wor the ruin on her—drinking and roaming about. I came back from a trip to Cork and found her at it. I blowed her up, and she wor all right for another spell until after our lad Tom wor born. He worn't more nor eight months old when she broke out again. Worse luck, I had just had

half-a-dozen bad trips ; and to cap all, my smack foundered.

‘ We didn’t live so quiet as a pair o’ lambs for a while after that. I wor sulky, and she wor wild—ever a-pointing at me, and telling that she would ha’ made her fortin if it hadn’t been for me ; and I wor thinking a bit as I’d been better to ha’ taken the warning o’ my friends, and left Jean to make her fortin. I wor fond o’ my lad, or I’d ha’ given her a clear berth at that time.

‘ At whiles we made up—that wor when she wanted to coax something out o’ me ; and it wor one o’ them whiles that she told me as she’d had an offer as would make a fortin for us. I wor glad to hear o’ that, as you may suppose ; for I wor worried and in debt, without a farthin’ to pay it.

‘ I axed her where the fortin wor to be made, and I’d help her.

“ It’s only to take one bairn and put it

in the place o' another," she said, "and there's a fortin for it."

'I wor staggered a good bit at that, and blowed her up again. But Jean had a coaxing way of her own when she liked. I worn't a bad man, your honour, and me and mine wor always reckoned honest folk. We wor honest, too, for though we'd had many a hard strait to get through, we'd managed to steer clear o' hurting a mate or cheating one either.'

'But I wor hard-up. Jean coaxed and pointed to our lad, that would ha' such a rare chance in life if we'd only a bit o' money. Then she showed me how it warn't anything particular wrong as she wor wanted to do, as it wor only just to lift the babby out o' one berth and drop it into another. Hews'ever it came about, I dunno rightly, but I gave in, with this condition, that I should go with her and see all that wor done.

'That wor settled, and we went to

London to a big hotel, where my wench had a confab with a gent, as I afterwards knowed to be Mr. Robert Cargill, the great mill-owner. Jean wor engaged as nurse to a Mistress Burnett. There was another woman, called Lizzie Wood, and she wor nurse to Mrs. Cargill. The trick that wor to be played wor this : Mrs. Cargill's babby wor to be brought into the room where Jean wor nursin' Mrs. Burnett's babby, and the two were just to change hands.

‘ It looked simple enough that way ; but as they were waiting for the chance to make the change, I got time to think, and I looked at it in this way : we changed the babbies ; what for ? I didn't know ; but I guessed there must ha' been some good reason for doing it, or Mr. Cargill wouldn't be so eager to get it done without anybody knowing on it, and to pay my wife a fortin for doing it. Looking at it that way, the thing didn't seem just so simple as the other way.

‘So while Jean wor nursin’ the bairn—Mrs. Burnett’s I mean—I wor left to watch it sleepin’ while Jean wor out. I didn’t waste the time, for I tattooed a cross on the babby’s arm without a soul on them being the wiser.’

‘What, did not your wife see it?’

‘Not until after it were done, your honour. When she did see it, she looked at me, and I saw there was a storm in her eye; but like enough she saw another in mine, for instead o’ blowing up she went on the coaxin’ tack again.

“What’s that for?” she axed.

“Wait a bit and you’ll learn,” says I.

‘She put her arm on my shoulder, and says, in a coaxing-like way, though I saw she wor bilin’ over with spite :

“You ain’t going to double on us, Tom?”

“I ain’t going to have this thing done,” says I, “for there’s more in it nor we see. I’ve made up my mind that it shan’t be

done, and I'm darned if I don't stick to it—that's all."

'She stood a minute as if she weren't sure whether to blow up or go on coaxing; then she says, atween two minds:

' "Look here, Tom: maybe you're right; I won't say you ain't. But when there's gold and silver at our feet, we needn't be too proud to stoop and pick it up. Now, here's the way to settle it, and please all parties, and get the fortin for our lad at home all the same."

' "How's that?" says I, doubting-like.

' "Mrs. Burnett don't want her babby taken from her any more than you do; it's only the dad as wants the thing done, and them other she's skeared to say no. Suppose we go on just as though we were going to do as the dad wants, and when the time comes, let him believe that it's done, while we just leave the babbies to their mothers without changing them at all—how do you like that, Tom? We

ain't rich enough, and we ain't fools enough either, I hope, to throw away a fortin, when we can get it without anybody being a bit the worse."

'I didn't like that much better than the real dodge at first, but sure enough it wor a temptation to a man as hard-up as me. The end on it all wor that I agreed.'

'Then the children were not changed at all?' exclaimed Mr. Lyon.

'We settled that they shouldn't, but I weren't sure that Jean would keep to the bargain, so I stuck by the babby night and day, barrin' when it wor in its mother's arms. I thought it were safe enough there. The day came when the change was to be made, and into the room where Jean and me was stepped the doctor.'

'What was his name?'

'Dr. Lergie were his name. He came in carryin' the babby, and after him came t'other nurse, Lizzie Wood. As soon as

they got well into the room, I shuts the door, and sets my back agin it. The doctor didn't notice me at first. He were looking bad, as though he didn't care about the job he were about. He went straight to Jean, and offered her the babby.

“Here, take the child, quick, and give me the other,” he says, summat angry-like. But I'd got my eye on Jean, and instead o' movin' to do his bidding, she kept staring at me. The doctor turned round to see what were the matter.

“She ain't going to give you the babby, doctor; and you're going to write down on that paper there, on the table, that we haven't made no change, and that you saw a blue cross tattooed on the arm of Mrs. Burnett's babby. That'll serve to prove there weren't no change, for the mark'll be there as long as she lives.”

‘He looked bad afore, but he looked worse now, and he were going to get into a

passion, a-swearing he'd have me turned out of the place.

“Very well,” says I, “do that, and I'll go straight to the nighest police-station, and tell 'em what you've been up to.”

‘At that he looked worse again, and Jean told him what we'd planned. He thought it over a bit, and then he said he'd consent, provided none on us told Cargill. I said we'd promise that, provided he wrote down what I told him. He were doubtful about that, but when he saw that nought else would quiet me, and as he didn't want to be exposed, and didn't want to offend Mistur Cargill, he wrote the thing out as I wanted him.

‘Then I made Lizzie Wood sign it after the doctor. She were too skeared to say a word. Next I got my wench to put down her name, and I put mine last. The doctor carried away the same babby he had brought, and made Mistur Cargill believe as it were all right, and the job done

according to order. To this day, so far as I knows, he believes that it was done, for Mistress Burnett was glad to promise to hold her tongue, on condition that her own child should be left to her.

‘Jean and me went back to Greenock ; but the money she got from Mistur Cargill, and that she was to lay by for our lad, was the greatest misfortin to her and to me. Whenever I were away on a voyage of, maybe, six weeks, I came back to find every farthing spent. It wor hard to bear, when a man was trying to hold up his head in an honest way. Five years ago, I got our lad sent off to sea ; and six months after that I went home to find the house emptied of every stick that were in it, and Jean gone off with a drunken shoe-maker.

‘I found her, and told her that she wouldn’t see me agin, and that she could do as she liked with the infernal fortin she had got from the great mill-owner. We

parted then, your honour, and I've only seen her once since that time.'

'When was that?'

'By all accounts it were the same day as she were murdered.'

'What did you go to her for?'

'I dunno right, barrin' that our lad were going to get married, and I thought somehow I'd like to see her jest once again. I saw her for about ten minutes, and learned that she had been passing herself off as a widow. That were all right. I'd no objections. I told her that the lad were going to get married, and she said she didn't care; we'd left her to do for herself for five years, and she wanted to hear nothing more about any on us. She'd been drinking, although it were early in the day. She blowed up, and I left her in a rare passion, swearing as she'd have her wish, and that she'd never set eyes on Tom or me again.'

Gorbal drew his cuff deliberately across

his brow, and gave vent to a long breath of relief, as if he were glad that the job was over.

‘I have no doubt you are an honest fellow,’ said Mr. Lyon, after a few minutes’ reflection; ‘but you have yourself admitted that, on one occasion, you made a slip, under the control of your wife—that throws some doubt on your information. But, while setting that consideration aside, your whole statement is so singular, that we must have very decisive evidence to support it. Where is Dr. Largie?’

‘He’s dead, your honour.’

‘Then where is the nurse, Lizzie Wood?’

‘She’s married, your honour, to Bob Little, and lives in Carron.’

‘And where is the paper Dr. Largie wrote?’

‘That’s what me and my mate here’—indicating the captain, who nodded and grinned—‘went to Greenock for. I had

left it, with two or three little things, in the care of an old pensioner I lodge with when I'm ashore there. Here it is.'

He pulled, from the depths of a pocket inside his jacket, a paper which had grown yellow with age and dust. The document was a simple statement that the child known as Mrs. Burnett's was really her own, and had not been exchanged for the child of Mrs. Cargill, as had been arranged. This the mark made on the child's arm, made by Tom Gorbai, would testify. It was signed George Largie, M.D., Elizabeth Wood, Jean Gorbai, and Tom Gorbai.

After Mr. Lyon had carefully examined this document, he turned again to Gorbai.

'You said that Mrs. Burnett was acquainted with the secret that her child had not been taken from her. Have you any proof of that?'

'None, your honour, barrin' the letters she wrote to my wife, thanking her for

what she had done, and pledging herself as she never would tell Mr. Cargill how he had been tricked.'

'Humph ! they are burnt,' muttered the magistrate, remembering the ashes Hadden had found in the grate of the outer room. Clearly, had Tavendale been the guilty one, he would have preserved such valuable papers, not burnt them. This statement of Gorbals destroyed the motive which had been attributed to the prisoner for his crime, and, together with the assertion of Kate, removed all doubt of Tavendale's innocence.

Who, then, was the guilty one ?

As if to answer that mental question, John Hadden was announced. When he entered the room with a worn, humiliated, and yet excited aspect, Mactier could not restrain a chuckle of triumph ; for was he not victor in the contest of skill ? Hadden perceived the chief constable's satisfaction, but he had no power or inclination to resent

it. He saluted him with meek respect, and then asked Mr. Lyon if he had learned anything new.

The result of Mactier's labours was made known to him—the more readily, as Mr. Lyon felt that he had treated him somewhat rudely at their last meeting. During the recital, Hadden sat with hands pressed on his head, moving his body to and fro, as he was accustomed to do when under strong emotion, and uttering an occasional ejaculation of surprise or expectation. When all had been explained, he started to his feet, waving his hands, whilst his eyes seemed to be starting from their sockets.

‘Her betrothed husband—in debt—only one mode of escape from being unmasked—only one chance to keep up the show of respectability—the letters proving the truth that would have ruined him burnt!—I see it all, I see it all!’ he cried, at the close of these incoherent utterances. ‘Give me a warrant at once!’

‘A warrant for whom?’ said the Sheriff, raising his brows, as if he half suspected that the detective’s wits were crazed.

‘For Laurence Hewitt, writer, George Street.’

‘Why, he is Mr. Tavendale’s agent.’

‘I know, I know all that; but he is the murderer at the same time.’

‘What! are you dreaming?’

‘No, no, no—I am awake, I tell you, and during the last two days all my inquiries, all my searching end with him. I have tried to blind myself to it, but I can do so no longer. Laurence Hewitt is engaged to marry Sarah Burnett. She has shown him the letters she found, as she did to me. He has spoken to her mother, and learned the truth from her. Sarah could not know the real facts; she would be too much shocked by the discovery she had made. Hewitt was to be her husband, and she would believe anything he

told her. Do you not see? He was fond of pleasure, in debt, and under the hardest of all necessities, that of concealing his bankruptcy by keeping up an appearance of plenty. Can you not understand how the man smarted and writhed? Then he discovered that only an old drunken woman stood between him and a million.'

'Thanks to my man,' said Mactier complacently, and for once agreeing with his rival, 'you have reached the truth at last: I believe that's it.'

'Give Captain Mactier the warrant!' cried Hadden.

'No,' said Mr. Lyon deliberately; 'we were too hasty on the last occasion, we must not commit a similar blunder this time. We will make some further inquiries, and if they confirm what you have stated, you shall have the warrant to-morrow.'

'To-morrow will be too late—he has an *alibi* ready—he has means of obtaining

early information of our movements, and to-morrow he will be far beyond our reach.'

Thereupon he rapidly narrated all that he had discovered, and, at the suggestion of the chief constable, Mr. Lyon yielded to Hadden's request, and granted the warrant. He, however, cautioned Mactier not to use it until he had made inquiries relative to Mr. Hewitt's movements during his absence from the theatre on the Monday evening.

That was the keenest cut of all poor Hadden had received, for it showed how little confidence was placed in him ; and he thereupon determined in his own mind that, this case settled, it should be his last.

CHAPTER XXXII.

AT BAY.

IT was almost dark when Hadden and Mactier, accompanied by Speirs, quitted the magistrate's house ; rain had begun to fall, and the wind was rising to unusual violence. As the evening advanced, the wind and rain swept all passengers within doors. The broad flashes of lightning vividly illumed the dark streets of the city ; and the thunder cracked over the houses, shaking them to their foundations.

About midnight the storm was at its worst, and only the few who were moved by the greatest necessity ventured forth.

One of the few was a man in a thick

overcoat, the collar of which was drawn up round his neck, meeting the flaps of the travelling-cap he wore, and both serving in a slight degree to protect him from the storm, and to conceal his features at the same time. The latter, indeed, seemed to be his chief anxiety ; for there was something in his stealthy rapid gait which intimated that he was thinking little of wind or rain.

He passed along Renfield Street, and then into Hill Street ; he stopped at the door of the late Mrs. Burnett's house ; he rang the bell furiously, and repeated the summons impatiently, without giving time for anyone to answer.

A few seconds had elapsed when the door was opened, and Sarah herself, partly undressed, with her rich black hair down, stood on the threshold, shading a candle with her hand from the wind, and peering at the impatient and untimely visitor. With a start of surprise she recognised him.

‘What has happened?—Why are you here at this hour?’ she cried excitedly.

‘Let me in,’ was the husky answer.

She drew back ; the man followed her into the house, closing and bolting the door behind him, and further securing it with the chain. Then he seized Sarah’s arm, and drew her into the parlour, as if he were well acquainted with the house.

‘The big dark eyes of Sarah rested on him with an expression of sharp inquiry, while she seemed to shrink from the touch of his hand, as if influenced by an instinct of horror rather than by reason. He had raised the peak of his cap, and it was with a bitter smile that he released her arm. At the moment, the light she held fell full upon his face, revealing the smile and a ghastly pallor, with a strange something in his eyes which made her draw back a pace, uttering a stifled cry.

The something which had startled her was the look of a maniac, who, finding his

utmost cunning outwitted, stands ready to spring fiercely at the throat of the first pursuer.

‘You are ill,’ she said, with more of the woman in her dry voice than usual, although she evidently spoke with a desperate effort to break the oppressive stillness which had prevailed from the moment the key had been turned in the lock.

‘Yes, I am ill,’ he answered wildly, with a nervous motion of his arms, as if he were throwing something from him; ‘the game is up!’

‘Do you mean that your creditors will not give you a little time? Were they not satisfied with the two thousand?’

‘Creditors! ay, my creditors are closing upon me; they will not give me time, they are at my heels now, and they will hunt me down,’ he said huskily; and then with sudden passion, ‘I am leaving Scotland—a fugitive, an outlaw—will you go with me?’

‘Go with you?’

‘Ay, will you throw away the fortune that may still be yours, despite my ruin? Will you forsake the luxury, the wealth your millionaire father can give you, and come with me—my wife in shame and exile, not wealth and high position, as we had hoped?’

He stood in an agony of suspense, awaiting her reply. The placid, respectable Mr. Hewitt had vanished altogether, and there stood in his place a man swayed by the fiercest passions of human nature—selfish love and great terror.

She stood bewildered, as if unable to understand him, and uncertain how to act. But the bewilderment passed away, and she became cold and calm as on the morning when she had first told John Hadden her strange story.

‘Has anything been discovered?’ she asked in steady tones.

‘Everything!’

‘It is known, then, that you have attempted to take advantage of the accident by which Mr. Cargill’s scheme for the change of places between myself and his wife’s daughter was not effected, and that I have attempted to defraud Kate Cargill of her birthright—is all that known?’

‘It is known only that I, being aware of the truth, have for my own gain endeavoured to get you recognised as Mr. Cargill’s legitimate daughter. If you like to stay here, it is still open for you to save yourself from the millionaire’s displeasure. Renounce me—tell everything that has happened between us. Let them know that you had seen no more than the letters you showed the old fool Hadden, and that he believed all you said. Tell them that I hoodwinked you, lied to you, and forced you to act as you have done.’

‘And you?’

‘I will never return to interfere with your enjoyment of whatever fortune may

be given to you. Have no fear on my account—you are safe from me.'

He spoke bitterly, as if her rejection of him at the moment were certain; and as if he accepted the revelation of her indifference to his fate as a punishment.

'And you believe that Mr. Cargill will still provide for me,' she went on calmly, 'even when he knows that I have attempted to deceive him?'

'He will know that you did not make the attempt wilfully, and so he will provide for you.'

'Then why should you fly? Why not remain, and share whatever he may give me?'

He was silent, and that wild expression in his eyes became more marked.

'Answer,' she said; 'why should you fly?'

There was a loud summons at the outer door, which caused the man and woman to start in alarm.

He gripped her arm with a trembling grasp, and bending over her, hissed in her ear :

‘That is why I must go. The truth as regards you is known, and the murderer of Jean Gorbai is discovered.’

‘In whom?’

‘In me——’

She sprang back from him, horrified; and the knocking at the outer door increased in violence.

‘It was for your sake as much as my own,’ he cried, desperately; ‘the woman held proofs more than enough to thwart our scheme twenty times. She would not sell them; she would not part with them—there was no resource but to remove her or resign the prize we strove for, and so nearly won. Do you go or stay? I have no time for words now—let one decide.’

‘Had you been poor—had there only been the fraud, I would have clung to you; but—but——’

‘But you cannot go with a murderer, you would say. Enough—I go alone.’

The sounds at the door indicated that those without were trying to break it open.

Hewitt sprang by his shuddering companion. She clutched at him and caught the sleeve of his coat.

‘No, no, Laurence!’ she cried, with the light of a nobler passion than any her nature seemed capable of on her face. ‘In shame and disgrace I will go with you, for—I love you.’

And with hysterical sobs she staggered forward, falling insensible at his feet.

The outer door was yielding, and with a savage growl of despair and rage Hewitt sprang away from the unhappy woman. He threw up the back-window of the lobby, and dropped out in the darkness and rain, just as the door was forced open.

Hadden, the captain, and a couple of constables, rushed into the house. But they found only Sarah Burnett lying in a helpless swoon, incapable of giving them any information, even had she been willing to do so.

The open window, however, told them enough for their purpose. The captain and the policemen pursued the fugitive. Hadden, in a half-crazy state of anger with the villain, and pity for the poor creature whom he believed to be the victim of Hewitt's knavery, stayed behind the others to give her what assistance she needed.

He remained with her for two hours after he had succeeded in restoring her to consciousness. She had looked up with wild pleading eyes into his face, muttering, 'Is he safe?' Then she had bowed her head—sullenly it seemed—and had not looked at him again. She did not speak a word more—not even when he

bade her good-night, and begged her to tell him if there was anything he could do to serve her. He went away dissatisfied and unhappy.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

MR. HADDEN'S NOTE-BOOK.

WHAT a fool I have been—what a blind, blundering idiot! I won't think of that now. I'll look only to what is before me to do. I have nearly brought an innocent man to the scaffold with my vain theories, my bombastic self-conceit, my mountebank sharpness, which would see farther through a milestone than other people. I am in a rage with myself. So would anybody else be who was so bitterly sensible of bungling stupidity as I am.

But I am punished. I mean to save him, and I'll do it: and I'll write down everything here to be a warning to me as long as I live, never to attempt the solution of

another problem which involves human life or character. If I do, may I be—well, never mind. I won't; that's enough. But I'll save him.

Oh, how that mad vanity of my pitiful nature shows itself even in the few lines written here! How many personal pronouns are there in it? An eminent caligraphist, who used to profess to judge character from the handwriting, and to predict the probable future by that judgment, but who made the unlucky mistake one day of signing another man's name to a bill instead of his own, and was convicted of forgery chiefly through my 'extraordinary perseverance and astuteness,' as the papers called it—this eminent caligraphist, before his departure for the colonies, let me into one or two secrets of his craft. This was one of them :

'Whenever you find a man using the pronoun "I" twice in one sentence, you may be sure he is a vain man, consequently

a foolish one, and therefore a pigeon ready for a cunning man to pluck. My experience has never found that theory at fault. But, mind, you cannot judge women by the same theory. Poor wretches ! it comes natural to them to begin or end every sentence with their own or their lover's individuality personified.'

He is quite right, and I am a vain man, consequently a foolish one—and therefore, etc.—but I'll save Alick Tavendale, all the same.

Now, let me try to write coolly and sensibly.

Poor Sarah ! Poor ! Good heaven—can I, do I pity her ? . . . Yes, I can and do pity her. Whatever may be her share in this dark business, I will not believe she had anything to do with Jean Gorbals's death, or had any power to prevent it. That villain Hewitt deceived her, blinded her, all the more easily because she loved him so. She is a brave girl, and if ever there was

such a thing as heroic, clinging, desperate love expressed by a woman's face and voice, it was expressed by hers when she came out of the faint and asked if he was safe.

Had it been my luck to have been a younger man—had it been my luck to have obtained such a store of affection, how I would have worked and toiled and fought to have made myself worthy of it, to have made a home worthy of her!

But that has got nothing to do with the business in hand. Once for all, let me thrust my own pain and regret aside, and proceed to the narrative of the events in a straightforward business-like fashion.

Poor girl, she was cruelly wounded by the events of that night. I had no heart to question her—no heart to try to force her to the confession which might have helped us to track the ruffian sooner. The long and the short of it was, I could not ask a single question, although perfectly aware that I was not doing my duty, and that

Mactier would have made much of my failure if he had known it. How could I ask her to help in hanging the man to whom she had given a heart that had the strength of any half-dozen women's hearts I ever heard of—except, maybe, Queen Elizabeth's, and she was a fine woman!

I left her without having made the slightest attempt to ascertain anything as to the direction in which he had fled. The truth is that nothing short of the memory of Tavendale's danger, the result of my own bungling, would have induced me to continue the pursuit. Had it not been that he lay in gaol with a mountain of evidence raised against him by my hands, there is every probability that I would have become an aider and abetter in the crime by covering Hewitt's escape.

But, although I was ready to sacrifice my duty to the innocent one whose life was threatened, so far as to avoid wringing Sarah's heart, I could not altogether forget,

and leave Hewitt to escape without trying to stop him. Besides, I hated the wretch for being such a fool as to sacrifice such a noble woman to his own ambition. That was what he had done—nothing less. For, let the matter end as it might, shame and ruin fell to her portion.

Captain Mactier and his men found the window by which he had escaped from the house wide open. They tracked him across several backyards and out to the street. They separated, and each took a different route: the captain taking the most promising one himself, which would soon have brought him to the fugitive's heels if it had not been the wrong direction altogether—as usual with the captain.

There was not one of them paused to learn what I might discover from Sarah; they positively ran from the house as if their man had been in sight.

But I did not hurry so. First, because several minutes were necessary to regain

self-possession, without which there was little hope of my labour availing much. Second, because a few minutes more were necessary to enable me to settle with myself whether to go on or stop ; and third, because there was no advantage to be gained in hurrying.

He had got the start, and he had got clear off. Then the first thing for me to do—since for Tavendale's sake I was compelled to go on—was to discover the direction he had taken. It was too late for him to get a train to anywhere. Would he take a cab ? No. An ordinary criminal seeking the best palpable means to outrun pursuit would be certain to do that. But Hewitt was no ordinary criminal ; a man who had arranged everything regarding the crime with such precision ; a man of education, and possessed of all the resources which a legal training could add to an unusually clear and penetrating intellect, would not, even in the confusion of un-

expected discovery, commit such a blunder as to hire a vehicle, which would be like laying down a line for the guidance of the pursuers in his track.

Whatever way he turned, he would perform the first stage of the journey on foot.

I was working out this conclusion when somebody touched my arm. It was Willie Thorne. He is a wonderful lad. I foresee a brilliant future for him ; he will either be a great detective, or a great rascal. He is on the straight road to the former at present ; but everything will depend on circumstances.

He supplied the information which I had feared it would require days to discover. He knew the direction Hewitt had taken, and, as I had calculated, he travelled on foot.

Willie had been the first to enter the house, and the first to slip through the open window. He had caught sight of the fugitive as he made his way to the street,

and was able to describe enough of his dress to help me to trace him. He wore a large overcoat, and a travelling-cap, with the lappets pulled down over his ears.

The boy, as soon as he had caught sight of him, thought of shouting for me ; but he had luckily checked himself, remembering that I could not hear him, whilst Hewitt would.

Darting out into the street, he knocked against a gentleman who was passing.

He halted, begged the passenger's pardon, and explained that he was running after a friend who had just left, and to whom he had forgotten to deliver a particular message. The gentleman begged him not to trouble himself about the collision, bowed, and walked on.

Hewitt took the opposite direction with all the speed one in pursuit of a friend might have displayed.

Admirable ! The coolness, the aptitude for any emergency, and the courage which could halt to make an apology when life

itself was dependent on every instant ! Will I ever manage to cope with this fellow ?

If I have got any gift of shrewdness or penetration, here is a rogue who calls its utmost effort into action ; here is a game that is worth all the petty triumphs of my past experience to win. I begin to feel that it will be possible to retire with some contentment if my exertions are successful in this matter. We shall see.

To proceed with Willie's information. He had thought of running forward and telling the gentleman the real cause of Hewitt's haste, and claiming his assistance in detaining him ; but he refrained, cunningly reflecting that he would only get his ears cuffed for his pains, instead of obtaining the required assistance, whilst he would make Hewitt aware that he was followed.

The streets were deserted, so that it became difficult for Willie to pursue unobserved. He kept close to the wall, and on the opposite side of the street. But there appeared

to have been little necessity for that precaution ; for Hewitt, walking at his highest speed, kept the lad running the whole way—and he is a good runner. The man did not once turn his head to see whether or not the road was clear behind him.

He got into the Cowcaddens, and at the corner of Wellington Street halted. He looked up and down the street, as if he had not made up his mind which way he would take.

Willie stood in a doorway, with his bonnet concealing the lower part of his face, lest the lamp shining opposite should discover it to the man—everything else was so dark and black. The rain was pattering on his bare head, and tossing his shaggy hair. I would have liked to have seen the little rascal at the moment, with his cat's eyes twinkling over the cap at our precious rat.

Hewitt's glance up and down the street showed him nothing but the dark houses

frowning at him, and pools of water shining under the lamps and spattering under the heavy rain. He heard nothing but the pattering of the rain and the wind rushing up the street, and whistling through the closes. At any rate, I can't fancy how he could have seen or heard anything more, considering that the stormy night had driven not only every citizen but every policeman—who should have known better—to seek shelter.

That accounts for the runaway getting such a clear course. If it had only been a dry night, he would have been stopped before he had made half the distance. But policemen have no more relish for ten hours' parade in a wet suit than other people, and no stronger constitutions to stand it. At the same time, it's thunderingly annoying that they have not.

Whether Hewitt was satisfied with his inspection or not, he did not stand long.

It's my opinion he had every step he took

planned beforehand, with the same mathematical precision he had planned the details of the murder. He had laid down exactly what he was to do in the event of success or failure, in the event of the best or worst, so that however things turned out, he could not be taken by surprise.

He started in the direction of Buchanan Street. He chose the most important streets for his flight.

That amazed me for the first minute or two, after hearing it ; and I stopped Willie till I had time to think it out. When I had thought it out, it only added another grain to my admiration of the villain's cunning.

A bungling rascal, who is always being found out, would have crawled through all the lanes and closes in the town to his destination ; and, twenty chances to one, in some dark corner he would have been pounced upon by a brace of our men. First, because it was a dark corner, and the

natural inference would be that he had no business to be there ; and second, because our men, having had so much to do with such bungling rascals, have got the stupid idea fixed like a rock in their minds that there are no rogues in the daylight.

That's the kind of idea which made Mactier miss the grandest triumph of his career.

Hewitt, not being a bungling rascal, selected the broadest way he could find for his route. First, because it was the quarter in which he knew he would be most free from the observation or interruption of the most vigilant of the force.

So, whilst Mactier and his men were burrowing in the purlieus of the town, here was our fugitive walking coolly along its highway.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

TRACKED.

HE proceeded to the Royal George Hotel. The house had, of course, been closed for several hours, and all lights were out. But there was no gate on the entry to the stable-yard, and into the yard stepped our man, Willie crawling after him.

It is an old-fashioned place with some old-fashioned habits. The ostler—when he is where he should be, and I, knowing something of his character, may say, mildly, that he is often where he is not expected to be—but when he is at home he sleeps in a room above the stable.

The door of his crib is reached from the yard by a flight of narrow stone steps, much

the worse for many years' wear, and, in consequence of their not being protected by a railing, rather dangerous to any man who happens to be unsteady on his legs. The steps were all the more dangerous when the yard was in such a state of darkness as that of this stormy night when Hewitt entered it.

The place was so dark that Willie could not see him at all, and could only track him by the sound of the light fall of his steps; and he was not a little afraid that any accident might cause him to stumble against our man.

But he is a sharp lad, and he did not make a step himself until after he had heard the sound of Hewitt's. When the sound stopped he stopped, and one of the pauses was so long that he began to fear that he had missed his prey altogether.

He became restless, but he did not move. He set his teeth together, and held himself down steadily in the one spot. He strained

his eyes trying to see through the darkness. That did not help him ; and at last he was on the point of running out of the yard to search the street, when he heard a thud like the soft part of the clenched hand striking against a door.

He crept toward the sound three paces and waited.

It was repeated.

Three paces more, and he waited until he had counted seventy-three. Then there appeared a thin streak of light just above his head, and he crouched down at the foot of the steps leading to the ostler's crib, at which point he discovered Hewitt by the feeble streak through the chink of the door.

'What's the matter now ?' was growled out from behind the door, as the bolt was drawn and the latch raised.

Hewitt pushed open the door and rushed in, and the door was closed again. Willie heard the bolt shot into its socket, or

fancied he heard it. At any rate, he ran the hazard of detection, and darted up the stair in time to hear the ostler's exclamation of surprise and recognition:

‘Hullo!—what the devil brings you here?’

Willie flattened his ear against the door.

‘All right, Nick,’ was Hewitt’s answer, in a tone that was sharp and yet conciliatory; ‘I wanted to see you on business, and as I am leaving the town in a hurry, I had no help for it but to rouse you up.’

There was no response to this for a minute, and, in spite of wind and rain, my lad fancied he could hear the two men breathing heavily. Then:

‘Let’s have a look at you,’ said Nick, and the light moved as if he were holding it up to the man’s face. ‘You look queer—haven’t had a split with your rich wife that is to be?’

‘No.’

That was a hard, steady negative, and implied that he was ready to knock any fellow down who dared to say anything to the contrary.

‘Haven’t come to ask me to hold over that balance of the two thousand again?’

‘No.’

The light was set down on the floor. Willie could tell that by the movement of the streak that was shining through the chink.

‘Then what the blazes have you come about?’ exclaimed Nick, as if he were disposed to become angry at the short answers he received, and at his failure to guess the particular object of this late visit.

If I had been there I would have guessed that he wanted to put off time so as to let the heat of the pursuit pass before he ventured out. And I would have been as much mistaken as my friend Dandy Nick was in his guesses.

Hewitt gave a sort of laugh which made my lad's flesh creep. He said it was more like the rattle in a dying man's throat than anything else he had ever heard.

'I'll tell you fast enough,' he answered, when he had got his horrible croak over; 'but first, have you got anything to drink, or a pipe?'

'I have nothing to drink here, but I have a pipe.'

'Well, give us a puff. I want a stimulant of some sort.'

There was silence for a little while, and then the smell of tobacco.

'Maybe you'll tell me now what lark you're after?' cried Nick, as if he were getting into a worse humour than before.

'All right; hurry no man's cattle. You see how cool I am sitting here, smoking my pipe of peace, whilst half the peelers in the town are whooping after me.'

'What for?'

Nick's voice sank to a terrified whisper as he made the inquiry. That's the one good quality in this rascal's character ; his little shrivelled soul has a fine sense of the majesty of the law.

'Would you very much like to know?' rejoined Hewitt jeeringly.

How can the fellow have cultivated such enormous coolness? I can only imagine it the result of the mathematical accuracy of every step he took and of every word he uttered.

'I would—I shall—I must know this minute!' almost shrieked the other.

'Very well, don't get into hysterics. I'll tell you. Put out the light.'

'Why?'

'It may be seen outside, and we may have more visitors than we want. Blow it out.'

'I won't; and the more who see it the better for me, and the sooner you get out of this the better for you. I've got eyes, and

it doesn't need a cuter chap than me to see that there is something more than two or three months in quod will pay for on your shoulders. I am not going to have myself implicated ; so clear out of this, if you don't want me to holler out loud enough to bring them same peelers you told me about within arm's reach of you. Now, I give you two jiffies to get out.'

Nick spoke boldly enough, but he was shivering all the time. And it must be owned that to be alone in a stable-loft with such a man as Hewitt, with such a look on his visage as he must have had, was not a pleasant position.

'Very well, man,' was the perfectly quiet answer, 'I'll go ; but if I had known that you were such an infernal coward, I would not have troubled myself about the account I came to settle with you to-night.'

'The two thousand—have you got it with you—the whole of it ?' cried Nick,

his greed getting the better of his terror.

‘Yes, the whole of it. Look at that—keep your hands off, though.’

‘Another order for two thousand signed by Robert Cargill?’ said Nick eagerly, and astonished. ‘That’s the ticket. Tip it over.’

‘Thank you. In the meanwhile, I’ll tip it into my pocket, and when you have done what I want you to do, then I’ll give it to you.’

The ostler spoke sulkily after that.

‘What do you want me to do? Haven’t I done enough for you? Haven’t I put myself into all sorts o’ scrapes for you to get that cash and save you from bursting up long ago? You know that if it hadn’t been for me your black cloth coat wouldn’t have saved the respectable dodge you have been carrying on this long while. If it hadn’t been for me, there’s not a man in the town who wouldn’t have known the steady, mealy-

mouthed Mister Hewitt to be what he is, a beggar who had got on a horse, and was riding to the devil.'

Hewitt laughed again, and then, with the utmost contempt, he said :

'Bah! A sermon from Dandy Nick is a treat, but I cannot afford time to hear more of it at present. I'll tell you what I want. I am going to Edinburgh. I will not trouble you with my address; but I wish a certain lady to know where to communicate with me.'

'And who is she?'

'Miss Burnett, Hill Street. I can write the note on a leaf of my pocket-book here, and I can trust you with it open for two reasons: first, because in spite of all your cunning you will not be able to read it; and next, because if you attempt to play any trick with me you will never see a penny of your money.'

'Supposing I don't want to be trusted with it,' snarled the ostler, sulkier than

ever, 'and supposing I won't go with it, what'll you say then?'

'Say? Why, good-bye, and you may say good-bye to your cash at the same time.'

'But suppose you don't get the chance of saying good-bye? suppose I won't let you budge one foot from this place till you hand over that order?'

'You're an ass, Nick.'

'Oh, you think so,' said he, feebly sarcastic.

'I'm sure of it,' Hewitt went on quite calmly; 'because a man of my nature, in my position, would strangle you at the first sign of an intention to raise the alarm.'

'Then we'll try it.'

There was a rush, and the door shook as if the ostler were trying to open it, and was suddenly hurled back; there was a sound as of a man falling on the floor. Then Hewitt's voice, still undisturbed:

‘I told you that you are an ass, Nick. Now take your choice : do as I bid you and get your money, or take your own way and lose everything.’

‘I’ll do what you want,’ answered Nick huskily, as if he were choking.

For several minutes neither spoke. Hewitt appeared to occupy the time in writing the note, which he now gave to the unwilling messenger.

‘Take that to Hill Street,’ he said, ‘and mind what you’re about. ‘The house is most probably watched ; see that you don’t fall into the hands of the beaks; and don’t let yourself be dodged in coming back to me here.’

‘Are you to wait here?’

‘I can’t think of a safer place. Off you go ; the lady will not be in bed, and so you can ring the bell as quietly as possible. She has had one fright to-night already, and I want to know how she stands it without giving her another. Come back sharp, as

I must be on the road to Edinburgh in another hour.'

'Are you to walk?'

'Perhaps I'll borrow a horse from you.'

Nick muttered something which my lad did not hear; for, having discovered where Hewitt was to wait and where the ostler was going to, he thought it time to start, so that he might be at Hill Street before Nick.

He managed that, and found me waiting in the quandary about the whole business which I have described. The ostler was delayed on his journey to Hill Street, and so, previous to his arrival, Willie had time to explain all the foregoing, which I have amended by information subsequently received.

My plan was speedily arranged.

I took Willie with me and planted him near the corner of the street, at the mouth of a dark close. As soon as he saw Nick Ogg enter the house he was to run for a couple of constables.

Then I walked up to Sarah's house—poor lass, I wish it could have been done any other way—and knocked quietly. The girl, Susan Barr, opened the door on the chain and peeped out from behind her apron, with which she had been rubbing her eyes furiously.

‘Open, Susan, and let me in,’ I whispered mysteriously; ‘it is for your poor mistress's sake.’

And so it was, Heaven knows; for surely it was the duty of anybody who cared a pin for her to save her from further contact with that scoundrel.

‘Oh, sir, she's awfu' bad!’ sobbed Susan, who knew nothing of my share in the late disturbance; ‘an' she's locked her door since you gaed awa', and she'll no speak a word.’

The chain was unfastened, and I stepped into the lobby, closing the door behind me.

‘Don't disturb her just now, Susan, by

saying I am here. All I want to do is to prevent a man who is coming from seeing her and annoying her. She has had sorrow enough for one night.'

'It's very kind o' you, sir, and I'll do just as you bid me.'

'That's right; you are a sensible lassie.'

Now I have him, safe and sure.

CHAPTER XXXV.

MORE OF MR. HADDEN'S NOTE-BOOK.

Success so far.

I GAVE Susan the necessary instructions. I did not flatter her when I said she was a sensible lassie. She would have been a very sensible lassie if it had not been for an excessive disposition to rub her eyes, sigh ‘Oh, sir, it’s awfu’!’ and blow her nose at the same time. This disposition, besides producing a rather discordant noise, rendered it a little difficult to explain anything to her. She understood me at last, and with some effort managed to keep quiet.

I went into the parlour and took my place beside the window. Susan sat down near the door. Poor Sarah was in the next

room, making no movement or sound of any kind. I wonder now what she could have been doing, for she was as still almost as the body of her mother, which was lying cold and silent in the bedroom.

The worst things turn out for the best sometimes, and perhaps Sarah's loss was one of those worst things.

I raised the window-blind about half an inch, and by the help of a street lamp opposite, I was enabled to observe the door.

I watched steadily for a quarter of an hour, and yet the ostler had not appeared. I began to fear that some accident had happened after Willie had run from the stable-yard, and that Nick was not coming.

Still I did not doubt that he would come, unless he had a great deal more respect for public justice than I ever accredited him with. In that case he might have gone in search of Captain Mactier, and delivered the criminal over to him at once. That

was not in the least likely, considering that he had such a large sum of money at stake.

But I am nervously inclined to look at the worst side of things, and to doubt success even when it is within my grasp. Like Napoleon the Great, I prepare for defeat:

I felt myself pretty sure that Nick would deliver his message ; and I felt pretty sure also that Hewitt would not stir from his hiding-place until he had received the answer. Not that I believed him capable of a regard for Sarah half strong enough to make him risk his own worthless neck on her account ; but I believed he would require her assistance. Or, worse still, he might be mean enough to doubt her affection, and consequently he would be anxious to assure himself—on his usual mathematical principles—that whatever happened she would not give evidence against him.

Faugh ! how little a bad nature can understand a good one !

I was sure he would come, and he came.

At the first glimpse I caught of the ostler's wiry little body I dropped the blind.

'Now, Susan, there's the man; keep quiet, and do as I told you.'

There was a timid sort of a ring as I spoke; and Susan, having blown her nose quietly to intimate assent to my wishes, stepped into the lobby. She had a candle and matches ready, and struck a light. I should have observed before that we purposely remained in the dark.

While Susan proceeded to answer a second summons of the bell, and a more decisive one than the first, I slipped over to the door of Sarah's room and listened.

Not a sound, not a movement. There was a light burning in her room—I was sorely tempted, and I yielded to the temptation.

I peeped through the keyhole.

She was sitting before the table; the light drawn close to her, and her hands, resting on the table, clasped a bundle of

papers. Letters? No doubt, and letters from him.

Her face was as white as chalk, and as hard-looking as if it had been one of those wretched little cast-iron ornaments you see in kitchens. She had been sitting that way for hours, I suppose, with all the dead hopes crushed there in her hands; with her whole heart and body frozen. I do not like to look upon death, but I would rather have spent a week in a family tomb, with all the coffins uncovered, than have looked for that one moment upon her living face, with its cold dead calm.

I was glad to hear Susan's voice. It recalled me to business.

I drew back from Sarah's room, and stood at the end of the lobby, listening to what passed at the outer door.

'It's a note for Miss Burnett,' I heard Nick say nervously, 'and I must have an answer.'

'My mistress canna be spoken to the

nicht, but you can leave the note and ca' back in the mornin'.'

'That won't do. The gentleman can't wait. I wasn't to leave without the answer.'

'Very well,' answered Susan (playing her part admirably), 'if ye'll come in a minute I'll gi'e her your message.'

She opened the door, and permitted the ostler to enter. She locked and chained the door before leaving him. Then she left him standing in the dark, and brought the note and the light to me.

The note was simply a leaf of an ordinary pocket-book, carefully folded. I opened it at once, and read:

'I am safe. Say nothing, and wait.'

I turned the paper over and over, but could find nothing more than these words. That puzzled me, for the information Willie had given me had led me to expect some mysterious writing in cypher which would

have given me the clue to the place where Hewitt proposed to hide himself, in the event of his escaping me at the stable.

I began to suspect a ruse of some sort, but of what sort I could not form the least idea, and I had no time to give the matter sufficient consideration at that moment. I knew him to be capable of the most unaccountable manœuvres — unaccountable, that is, to a second party, but perfectly clear to himself, and definite in their aim.

Prompt action became all the more necessary. I took the candle from Susan, and marched out to my friend Nick. I held the light up, so that he might see my face at once.

He recognised me, and at the same moment gave a snort like a pig alarmed, wheeled about to the door, attempting to open it.

‘Don’t be in a hurry, Nick,’ I said ; ‘I have got the key here, and I will let you out in time enough.’

He saw that he was in a trap, and like a sensible fellow submitted—very doggedly, though. He fumbled in his trousers-pockets with his hands, then suddenly began to button his jacket, as if he had no time to lose. He nodded, scowling as if he would have liked to have eaten me.

‘I didn’t expect to find you here, old fellow,’ he stammered, with mock familiarity and friendliness.

‘The pleasure is all the greater in the surprise,’ said I jokingly. ‘I always like to do business pleasantly. You need not be uncomfortable, however; there is no harm meant to you.’

‘I am not the least uncomfortable; there is nothing I have done as I’m afraid of.’

‘I’m glad to hear it, as in that case you won’t object to come with me.’

‘Where to?’

‘Only as far as the stable-yard of the Royal George. You’ve got a friend of

mine there whom I have some particular business with.'

The thought of his two thousand pounds which he had so nearly regained, and which he was now so likely to lose altogether, flashed across his mind. I could see it by the twitch of his mouth, as he plucked up courage for a bold falsehood.

'There's no friend of yours there that I know of, and I'm not going to the stable to-night again.'

I put my hand in my pocket, and produced the prettiest pair of bracelets he had ever seen. I held them up to let him have a good look at them; and they made a decided impression. He shrank back as far as he could get, and stood watching me, like a whipped cur who would like to show his teeth and dared not.

'Now, I mean these ornaments to be devoted to the special use of the friend I refer to,' was my friendly intimation; 'and I don't want to have the trouble of using

them until I meet him. So be sensible, Nick, just to oblige me.'

'You've got no right to use them on me; and if it comes to that we are man to man, and you are an old one.'

'Ay, but a tough one. We won't argue that though, because you're wrong again. There are a couple of gentlemen waiting outside to take part in our amusement.'

He gave a suppressed howl, and began to wipe the perspiration from his brow.

'There's a fortune lost,' he whined; 'the money as I've worked hard for, and come honestly by—it's a damned shame that I should be the loser on his account!'

'You'll lose a great deal more if you don't take my advice. Come now, are you to be quiet, or am I to use force?'

'Well, do as you like—seems to me as if I was born for nothing but to be kicked about by everybody.'

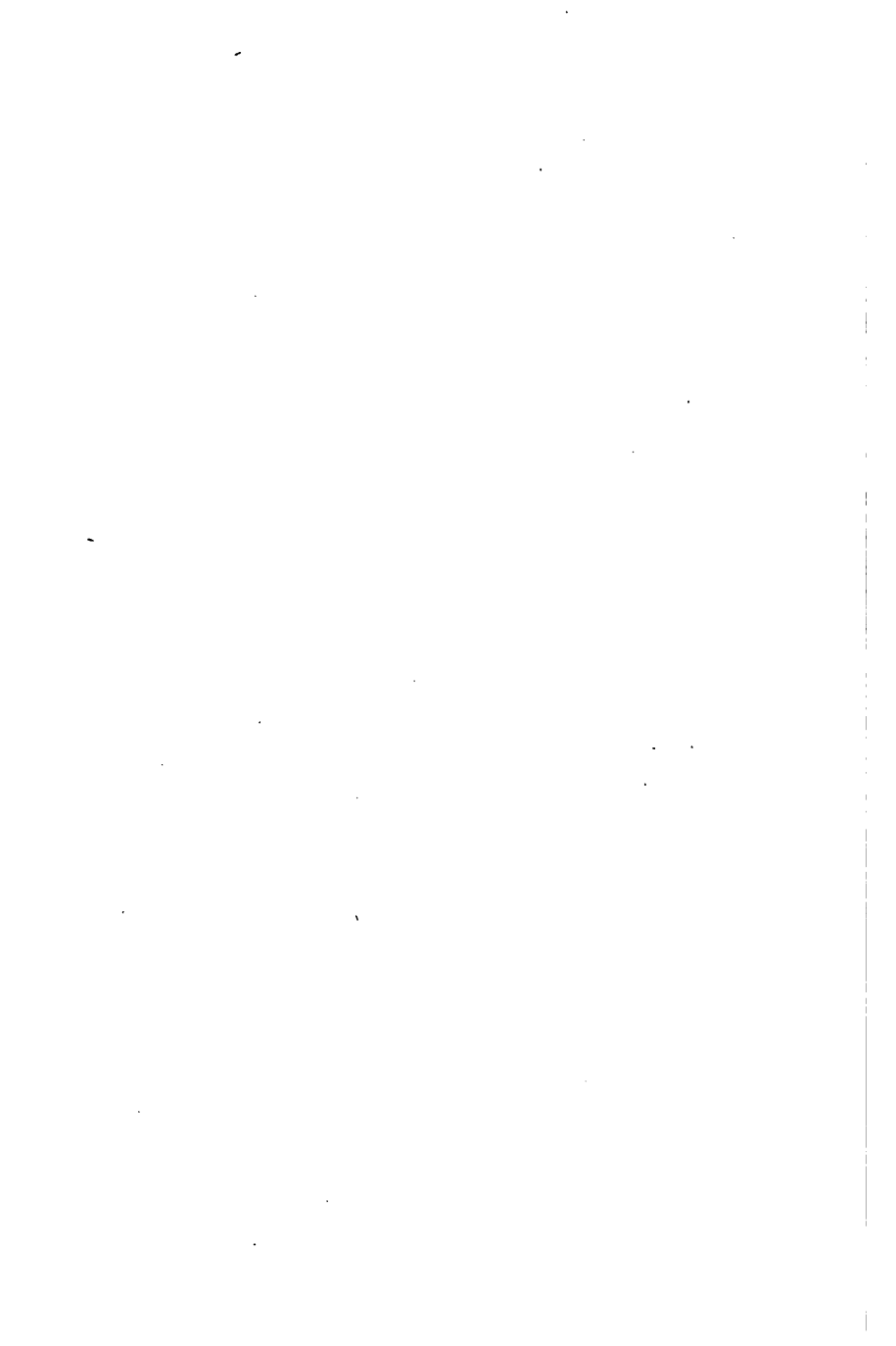
Knowing Mr. Ogg's character, and knowing that the money which he was about to

lose was come by in some gambling transaction, I had not much sympathy for him ; but I did pity the hysterical struggle of his greed with his terror of the law.

I went back to Susan, and bade her not say a word about this transaction to her mistress. Then I unlocked the door and passed out with the ostler.

On the doorstep a couple of constables were waiting for us ; and that spectacle completely disposed of any thoughts of deceiving me which Nick might have entertained. He became submissive as a lamb.

END OF VOL. II.



[October, 1884.]



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